

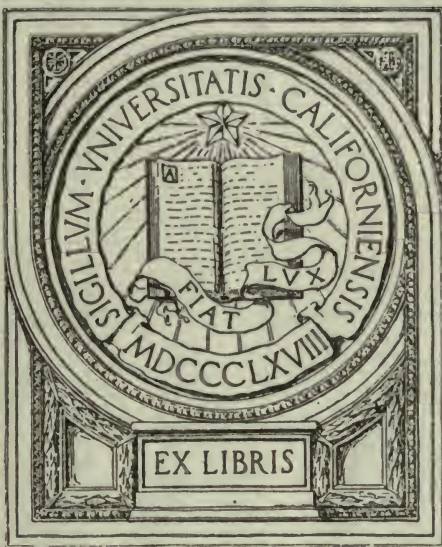


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Aneurin Williams.

IN MEMORIAM  
HENRY U. BRANDENSTEIN



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THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER

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THE  
ODYSSEY OF HOMER  
BOOKS I-XII

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

THE EARL OF CARNARVON

London  
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AND NEW YORK  
1886

In Memoriam -  
Henry U. Brandenstein

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## PREFACE

I WILL make no excuse for another translation of Homer's *Odyssey*. My best apology is to be found in the pleasure which its composition, carried on under many interruptions, has given me. If only a good translation be needed, the task has long ago been achieved; but it has been truly said of the *Odyssey* that it never grows old, and that each generation in turn loves to tell the story in its own language. So also each traveller along that well-trodden road will gratefully acknowledge, as I do here, the labours of his predecessors. The work of a great poet like Pope, the quaint Elizabethan conceits of old Chapman, the musical verse of Worsley, the remarkable vigour of "*Avia*," whose literary disguise has been recently abandoned, and the mingled accuracy and spirit of Messrs.

Butcher and Lang attest the labour, ability, genius, which have been expended in the attempt to reproduce to English minds the sense of the great original ; and of them all it may be truly said, that the loss of any one would be a loss to English literature.

I will only add on this head that of the various forms and metres which were open to my choice, I have preferred blank verse as the best compromise between the inevitable redundancy of rhyme and the stricter accuracy of prose ; and though a ten-syllable verse is generally unequal to express the full sense of the corresponding Greek line, the difficulties of a translation are not really diminished by the addition of one or two or four syllables.

Translations cannot be poems ; and I fear that it is given to no one, now or hereafter, to reproduce in another tongue the full stateliness and variety, "the rapid movement and continuous harmony," of Homer, as I have seen it somewhere well expressed ; but an English, and especially a non-classical, reader will best appreciate the original if translated into language



of great simplicity. Analogies may doubtless be found in the ideas and language of a later time, but the conditions of the Heroic and the Feudal Ages were essentially different, and the simple phraseology of the Bible seems to me best to fit the writer and the subject.

I have carried my translation only to the end of the first twelve books, but the twelfth is no bad halting-place. It is a natural half-way-house in the story. Odysseus has told the tale of his wanderings, and in the opening lines of the thirteenth book he returns to Ithaca, which for ten years has been the goal of his endeavours. A chapter not less interesting, but quite new, opens with the thirteenth book, and I have paused there.

In regard to proper names I have, after some hesitation, adopted the Greek rather than the Roman nomenclature; but, following the example of an eminent historian, I add, for the use of purely English and non-classical readers, a list of some of the principal names, with their Latin, or perhaps I should say their European, equivalents.

It is impossible to omit even from this cursory explanation a reference to the geography of the *Odyssey*; but any one who attempts to draw a map to represent Homer's geographical conception of the world, and at the same time to be true to physical facts, will undertake an impossible task. A knowledge of geography is only acquired by familiarity with maps, and in the time of Homer there were none. The geographical notions of the time were derived from the reports of Greek sailors who were familiar with their own coasts, or from the tales of the Phœnician mariners who, partly in quest of legitimate trade, partly for piratical objects, wandered far and wide over the blue waters of the Mediterranean.

The general idea, however, of Homer's earth was that of a circular plane, surrounded by the broad river "Ocean," beyond which lay the world of Spirits, from which the sun daily arose and into which he nightly sank. Over the whole of this great plane stretched the solid and brazen vault of Heaven, supported by the pillars which the Titan Atlas upbore. Of the different

countries, islands, and peoples which that large space embraced, it is vain to look for any accurate description. Some of the numerous commentators have sought to identify each spot mentioned by Homer with some place well known to modern geographers, whilst others, in despair at the difficulties involved in this course, have represented the whole as a mere poetic fiction woven out of the brain of the great poet. I cannot bring myself to accept either of these extreme views. I am rather disposed to believe that the greater part of Homer's geography had an actual existence, though wrapped in a cloud of beautiful legend and poetical fancy ; and if this be so, all calculations founded on particular winds, and on the number of days' sailing or drifting or floating, are absolutely unreliable. Homer, like Shakespeare, is often represented as intending anything or everything that a passage can mean or imply, but there are limits to this theory. It is impossible to reconcile primitive poetry with modern science.

The eastern coast of Greece, as has been

more than once pointed out, Homer both knew and described correctly. Of the west his accounts are more uncertain and conflicting, and even the description of Ithaca and the neighbouring islands is far from accurate. Yet I wish to believe—allowance being made for distances, winds, currents, and, above all, for misty imaginings of localities—that Phæacia may be identified with Corcyra, the islands of Æolus with Lipari and Stromboli, the Cyclops' land with Sicily, Calypso's island with Malta, Scylla and Charybdis with the Straits of Messina, the land of the Lotus-eaters with the fertile shores of North Africa, and possibly the islands of the Sirens and of Circe with some points on or near the Italian coast, if not precisely those which the Latin poets and geographers adopted. On the accompanying map I have indicated this belief, not as being able to establish it by proof, but because it seems to me that the thoughts and fancies of the great poet are invested with a fresh interest when wedded to the facts, so far as those facts were known, of his own age. I may perhaps say, with a slight alteration in

the words of the original :—"Datur hæc venia Antiquitati ut miscendo commentitia veris primordia Geographiæ augustiora faciat."

But it must be remembered that if the *Odyssey* is not a manual of geography, it had in it to the contemporaries of Homer all the making of geography. It lifted in part a veil of old mystery; it opened a new chapter of enterprise; it incited to action; it stirred men's minds with its breezy verse, and its description of ocean's changing moods—sometimes in sunshine, sometimes in mist—as much as the sea winds would rouse their physical energies. It has been said that the *Iliad* was written for men, and the *Odyssey* for women; and in its pure and lofty delineation of female character it might well be the lesson-book of a young nation. But to me it seems written for all classes, ages, and times, and as long as the love of adventure, the charm of nature, the subtle appreciation of human feeling, as long as courage and prudence and truth and constancy can kindle the imagination and awaken men to good and noble impulse, so long the *Odyssey* will be to countless

generations what Charles Fox said it was to him, "the first tale in the world."

It is perhaps desirable to add a few words of very brief explanation of the poem itself.

The *Odyssey* is the story of the wanderings of Odysseus,—or Ulysses as he was called by the Latin writers—Prince of the island of Ithaca. He had accompanied Agamemnon, King of Argos, and the Greek host who sailed to Troy to avenge the wrong done by Paris, son of Priam, who had seduced from her home and duty Helen, the wife of Menelaus, the fairest woman in Greece. He had borne his part during the ten years' war, the first in counsel, and equal to the first in battle; and now for another ten years he was doomed to wander, partly through the fault of his companions, partly through the wrath of the Sea-God Poseidon, whom he had offended, in a vain attempt to regain his native land and his faithful wife Penelope.

She, on the other hand, had been exposed to the persecution of the neighbouring Chiefs, who, hoping and believing that Odysseus would never



return to Ithaca, were brawling and feasting daily in his palace, wasting his substance and pressing her to give her hand to some one amongst them. But constant to her distant lord she refuses to believe that he had perished, and sometimes by artifice, sometimes by plain denials, she succeeds in baffling their demands. Her son Telemachus—a well-intentioned but much feebler character—unable to cope with these powerful and arrogant Suitors, secretly takes ship to seek for tidings of his father, first at Pylos, where the wise and venerable Nestor ruled, and afterwards at Sparta, where Menelaus and Helen held their Court; and Penelope is left to herself, only aided by her own courage and by the support of Athené, the patron Goddess of Odysseus. Meanwhile the appointed time for the return of the Hero is at hand; in little more than one month from the departure of Telemachus, Odysseus returns to Ithaca, where, after certain stirring adventures, he slays the Suitors and recovers his kingdom and his wife.

The first twelve books of the poem describe the persecution of Penelope by her Suitors, the

flight of Telemachus from Ithaca, and the adventures of Odysseus with men, with monsters, by land, on the sea, in the charmed bower of the Enchantress, in the grotto of the island Nymph, in the dread regions of the world of Spirits. It is a marvellous and exquisite fountain of romance, from which others in later times have drawn without stint; but it is also the picture of a noble character, "*adversis rerum immersabilis undis*," buffeted but never overwhelmed by the waves of calamity, upholding and guiding his weaker comrades, proof against temptation, undismayed by peril, courteous to women, full of tact with men, a wise counsellor, a bold warrior, a skilful mariner, a gentle prince—inferior only to the highest conceptions in History or Fiction in that it is necessarily without the purifying and inspiring power of Christianity. For myself, I believe that the more the Odyssey is studied the more delightful as a story, a poem, and an ensample of life will it appear.



# NAMES OF GREEK GODS, GODDESSES, AND HEROES.

GREEK.	LATIN.
Zeus . . .	Jupiter.
Poseidon . . .	Neptune.
Ares . . .	Mars.
Hermes . . .	Mercury.
Helios . . .	Sol or the Sun.
Hephæstos . . .	Vulcan.
Hades . . .	Pluto.
Heré . . .	Juno.
Athené . . .	Minerva.
Artemis . . .	Diana.
Aphrodité . . .	Venus.
Eos . . .	Aurora.
Leto . . .	Latona.
Persephoné . . .	Proserpine.
Odysseus . . .	Ulysses.
Heracles . . .	Hercules.
Aias . . .	Ajax.



BOOK I

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## SUMMARY OF BOOK I

THE story opens with an assembly of the Gods in Olympus, who take thought for the hard case of Odysseus, who, now in the tenth year of his wanderings since the siege of Troy, is detained by the Nymph Calypso in her island of Ogygia.

Poseidon, through whose anger Odysseus has endured so much sorrow and toil, is happily absent in the far distant land of the Æthiopians, and Pallas Athené, who has ever befriended Odysseus, is present to plead his cause.

It is decided by the Gods to order the release of Odysseus ; and Athené, in the form of Mentès, an ancient and hereditary friend of the family, speeds to Ithaca, where the Suitors are importuning Penelope with their entreaties for her hand, and are wasting the substance of the house in uproarious revels.

Telemachus receives the Goddess with courteous hospitality, and talks to her of his father. She counsels him to resist the Suitors, to call an assembly of the people, and to visit Pylos and Sparta, where he may hear tidings of Odysseus.

The Goddess then departs in the form of a sea-eagle, having put courage into the heart of Telemachus, as was much needed, and the revel in the palace is renewed.

Penelope comes forth from her bower, Telemachus disputes with the Suitors, and night falls on the revellers and disperses them to their homes.

Telemachus retires to rest, and meditates on the journey which Athené had enjoined on him.

## BOOK I

TELL me, O Muse, of that quick witted Chief,  
Who, when the sacred citadel of Troy  
Was wasted by his arms, wandered abroad,  
And many towns beheld and many men,  
And knew their ways and purposes ; and oft  
He suffered trouble on the stormy deep,  
Striving for life and seeking a return  
For his companions. Yet not even so  
Might he achieve deliverance for his friends.  
They in their folly perished—they the fools,      10  
Who dared to feast upon the sacred kine  
Of Helios, Heavenly King ; from whom the God  
Withheld the day of safe return to home.  
So tell us, as thou wilt, daughter of Zeus  
The story of these doings.

Now the rest  
Of the Greek host, who had destruction fled,

Escaped from wars and flood, were safe at home ;  
But him who yearned to see his wife and home,  
Him in her hollow grot, the awful Nymph,  
Calypso held a captive ; for she longed 20  
To have him for her lord. But when the time  
Came in the fated fulness of the years,  
Not even then might he and his true friends  
Find respite from their labours ; yet the Gods  
All save Poseidon pitied him ; but He  
Against Odysseus raged unsparingly  
Till to his home he came.

Now the Sea God

Had to the distant Æthiopians gone,  
Who dwell upon the confines of the world,  
Parted in twain—they whom the rising sun 30  
Shines on, and they, whom, when he sinks to rest,  
He brightens with his rays. Thither the God  
Journeyed to taste the hecatomb of bulls  
And lambs that waited him ; and at the feast  
He made him merry. But the other Gods  
Within the palace of Olympian Zeus  
Met in high conclave ; and to them 'gan speak  
The Sire of Earth and Heaven ; for He had thought  
Upon Ægisthus whom Orestes slew  
The son of Agamemnon—so He spake ; 40

“ Ah me how falsely do shortsighted men  
Lay to our charge the authorship of ill ;

'Tis their own foolishness that brings them pain  
Beyond th' award of Fate ; as even now  
Ægisthus took to him the wedded wife  
Of Agamemnon and her husband slew,  
Though well he knew the doom that waited him.  
For we ourselves foretold it, and we sent  
Quick-sighted Hermes, who e'rst Argus slew,  
To bear this warning message to his ears— 50  
' Kill not the man nor wed his wife, for know  
That from his son Orestes shall proceed  
Full retribution, soon as he shall come  
To man's estate and seek his native land.'  
Such was the kindly counsel Hermes gave,  
But all in vain : Ægisthus was unmoved,  
And now hath paid the price of all his sins,"  
He spake and to his words quick answer made  
Athené grey-eyed Goddess ;

O, our Sire

Thou son of Cronos, thronéd in the height, 60  
Rightly he perished ; and may such as he  
So to destruction go : but my fond heart  
Grieves for Odysseus, wise and hapless chief,  
Who far from friends long time hath suffered sore,  
Captive within a woody sea-girt isle  
Which lies in midmost ocean. Therein dwells  
A Goddess, daughter of the baleful Atlas,  
Who knows each sounding of the ocean depths,

Upbearing the tall pillars which divide  
The firmament from Earth. His daughter there 70  
Holds captive the sad chief and ever strives  
With soft and wily speech to sooth his grief,  
Nor let him think of Ithaca ; but he  
Yearns to behold the smoke go up once more  
From his loved home and craves to die. What then ?  
Is not thy heart, Olympian Father, moved ?  
Hast thou no thought how once on Troy's broad plains  
Beside the Argive ships Odysseus sought  
By solemn sacrifice to win thy grace ?  
Why burns thy wrath so hot against him Zeus ? 80  
To her made answer the cloud-gathering God ;

“ How say'st thou so my daughter, how should I  
Forget Odysseus, who above all men  
Is wise, above all men hath sacrificed  
To the Immortal dwellers of high Heaven ?  
Nay 'tis Poseidon, the earth-circling God,  
Whose wrath against Odysseus knows no stint ;  
For that he sightless Polyphemus made,  
The mightiest Cyclops of that giant race.  
For him Thoosa, Phorcys' daughter, bare, 90  
Phorcys a sovereign of the barren main,  
Unto Poseidon in the deep sea caves ;  
And therefore hath the God Odysseus willed  
To be a homeless wanderer from his land.  
Yet might he not deprive the Chief of life—



Then let us counsel take for his return,  
And so Poseidon shall his wrath abate ;  
For not e'en he unaided and alone,  
Hath power to strive against all other Gods."

To him the grey-eyed Goddess made reply ; 100  
"O son of Cronos thronéd in the height,  
Immortal Father, if it be the will  
Of the blest Gods Odysseus should return  
Unto his home, then to Ogygia's isle  
Send we our messenger ; let Hermes bear  
This certain counsel to the fair-tressed Nymph,  
That the long suffering chieftain be set free  
And to his home return : meanwhile will I  
To Ithaca and rouse his son to deeds  
Of courage and emprise, and bid him call 110  
The long-haired chiefs to council, and declare  
A solemn warning to the Suitors, who  
Are ever preying on his flocks and herds.  
Him will I speed to Sparta and the shores  
Of sandy Pylos, to seek tidings there  
Of his dear father, and to get himself  
Undying honour in the eyes of men."

She spake and bound the sandals on her feet,  
Which like the wind upbore her in her flight  
O'er the dry earth and the unmeasured sea, 120  
Fair and divine and golden ; then she took  
Her ponderous spear, a doughty massive beam

Wherewith she daunts whole armies in her wrath,  
A mighty daughter of a mighty sire.

Down swept the Goddess from Olympus' heights  
And by the gateway of Odysseus' hall  
All in the land of Ithaca she stood,  
Within the courtyard. In her hand she held  
Her brazen spear, and much in form she seemed  
Like Mentès, Captain of the Taphian bands, 130  
Come hither as a guest. Before the doors  
On hides of oxen, which themselves had slain,  
The haughty Suitors sat, with game of draughts  
Making them merry, while the busy throng  
Of heralds and of menials filled the bowls  
With wine and water, and with sponges cleansed  
And laid the board, or carved the unstinted meat.  
First of them all Telemachus espied  
The Goddess where she stood, as grieving sore  
He sat among the Suitors and in thought 140  
With himself communed of his noble sire ;  
How he might come again and scatter wide  
That hateful band and win him high renown,  
And o'er his own bear rule. As thus he mused,  
Sitting amid the Suitors, he beheld  
The figure of Athené by the porch,  
And straight to her he strode ; for ill he liked  
That stranger guest should linger at the gate ;  
And clasped her hand and took from her her spear

And thus addressed her ;

“ Welcome stranger friend. 150

Rest thou—when thou hast tasted of our cheer

Thou shalt declare thy purpose here to-day.”

He spake and led the way and close behind

Athené followed. Now when they were come

Within the palace, straight he leant her spear

Against a lofty pillar, in the stand

Wherein the arms of his long suffering sire

Were duly ranged ; then to a chair of state

He led the Goddess and beneath her feet

He spread a rich embroidered coverlet 160

And placed the footstool ; to her side he drew

Beyond the crowd of Suitors a fair seat,

Lest the loud talk of them that sat at meat

With insolency flown, might vex his guest,

Nor suffer him to question of his sire.

Then came a maid, who bare a golden jug,

Wherewith she water poured in silver dish,

And drew a polished table to his side ;

Whilst a staid house-dame brought the wheaten bread,

And choicest dainties from her bounteous store. 170

There too the carver set before the guests

In goodly platters meat of every kind,

And cups of gold which ever and anon

A herald filled.

Now trooping to the feast,

The noble Suitors came ; on chair and couch  
They sat them down ; the heralds water bore,  
The handmaids served the bread, while striplings  
crowned

Their cups with wine. So they stretched forth their  
hands

Unto the banquet, and they ate their fill.

Then rose before their mind the thought of song 180

And mazy dance, which are the feasts' delight.

And in the hands of Phemius was placed

The lyre—of Phemius constrained to sing

And make sport for the Suitors. So the bard

Touched the sweet chords in prelude of his lay.

Meanwhile Telemachus with head bowed down

Close to the Goddess' side, that none might hear,

Thus spake ;

“ Wilt thou kind guest be wroth if I

Speak freely to thee ? These men have no care

But of the lyre and song ; they little reck

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Of him whose heritage they spoil and waste,

Whose bones are scattered by the rolling surge,

Or on the mainland whiten in the shower.

Yet could they see him here in Ithaca

Methinks they'd pray rather for speed of foot

Than store of gold or raiment. But he's gone

To an untimely doom, nor is there help

Or consolation, e'en though one should say

That he will yet come home ; for never more  
Shall be to him the day of his return— 200  
But come now tell me truly whence thou art,  
Who were thy parents, what thy native town,  
What was the bark that bore thee to these shores,  
And what thy crew ? whom say they that they were ?  
For sure thou cam'st not hitherward by land.  
So tell me truly art thou one whom chance  
Brings hither as a stranger, or a friend  
Known to my sire ? Yea many are the guests  
Who 'neath this roof have come, for he methinks  
A wanderer was and known of many men." 210

To him the grey-eyed Goddess thus replied ;  
" Surely will I make answer truthfully.  
I am the son of wise Anchialus,  
Mentes, the king of a seafaring race,  
And hither with my bark and Taphian crew,  
I've sailed across the seas to foreign lands  
Freighted with burnished iron to exchange  
For the bright brass of Temesa ; and now  
In Reithrus' haven 'neath the woody heights  
Of Neius far beyond the city's walls 220  
My ship lies moored. Yes sure our Houses were  
Bound each to other by most ancient love.  
If thou hast doubt go ask Laertes' self,  
Who comes no more, 'tis said, into the town,  
But in the country bears his toilsome lot

Tended by some old crone, who food and drink  
Provides to keep him, when his limbs grow faint  
And round his vineyard plot he weary creeps.  
'Twas bruited that thy father was at home  
And therefore came I ; but 'tis plain the Gods 230  
Make him to wander far from Ithaca.  
For know, thy noble father is not dead,  
But lives, albeit a captive, in mid sea,  
In island ocean-girt ; where lawless men  
Against his will constrain him to abide.  
And though I have nor skill in augury  
Nor knowledge of the mystic flight of birds,  
Yet will I prophecy what things the Gods  
Are purposing to do and what shall be.  
Henceforth for no long time shall he remain 240  
An exile from his land—no, not though bands  
Of iron bind him ; for his ready wit  
E'en now is planning a return to home.  
But come now tell me, art thou truly sprung  
From great Odysseus, whom in face and eyes  
Thou much resemblest ; for I knew him well,  
And close our converse was, 'ere he for Troy  
Set sail, what time on board the hollow ships  
The Argive Chieftains wended to the war.  
Since then I never saw Odysseus more." 250  
To her the wise Telemachus replied ;  
" True answer will I make. I am his son—



So saith my mother—I vouch not the fact,  
For there lives not the child who knows his birth.  
Yet would I were the son of one more blest,  
Who in the full fruition of his wealth  
Is overta'en with age ; but I am sprung  
From the most luckless of the human race.  
Thou hast my answer."

Then to him replied  
The grey-eyed Goddess ;

"Nay be sure the Gods 260  
Have made thee spring from no inglorious race,  
For that Penelope thy mother was.  
But tell me truly wherefore art thou here ?  
What means this rout and throng of banqueters ?  
Is it a drinking bout or wedding feast ?  
For sure 'tis not a meeting where each man  
Pays to the common stock. This shameless crew  
With arrogance make merry, and their acts  
Might move the anger of a righteous man."  
To her Telemachus replied ;

"My friend, 270  
Much dost thou question of our race and house.  
In high repute and opulence it stood  
What time its Lord was here ; but him the Gods  
Have made to vanish out of mortal ken  
In their displeasure. Were he dead in sooth,  
And in the arms of friend and comrade fallen

Upon the soil of Troy, when he had made  
An end of all the tangled skein of war,  
I would not grieve so much. Th' Achæan host  
Would in his honour have reared high a mound, 280  
And e'en to me, his son, in times to come  
He would have left renown ; but now unknown  
And all unhonoured he hath passed away,  
And the storm-winds have snatched him from our sight.  
Sore is the anguish he hath left to me.  
But not for him alone I mourn ; 'tis more  
That the great Gods have wrought me other woes.  
For all the noblest chieftains of these isles,  
Dulichium, Samé and the woody heights  
That crown Zacynthus, they too who bear rule 290  
In rocky Ithaca are here to woo  
My lady mother and to spoil the house.  
But she nor gives consent nor yet denies  
The loathed bridal ; so they spoil and waste  
The substance of my house ; and erelong me,  
E'en me myself, they will devour."

He spake,  
And wrathful Pallas to him made reply :  
" Ah sore the need for thy far distant sire,  
To show his strength upon this shameless crew.  
Would he were here standing beside the gate, 300  
With helm and shield and his two spears in hand,  
Such as when first I knew him in our halls,



Drinking and joying in the feast, what time  
He came from Ephyra from out the house  
Of Ilus son of Mermerus ; for there  
In quest of deadly drugs wherein to steep  
His brazen arrows had Odysseus sailed ;  
But Ilus gave them not, such awe he had  
Of the Immortal Gods ; therefore my sire  
From the great love he to Odysseus bore 310  
Gave him the poison. Would that he were here,  
Such as in might he was that day, to keep  
These Suitors company ! methinks they'd find  
A bitter bridal and a speedy doom.  
But on the knees of the immortal Gods  
Lie the blind lots of future weal or woe,  
Whether or no thy sire shall come again,  
And in his halls avenge him of his foes.  
So with thyself take counsel how to drive  
These Suitors from thy house and mark my words. 320  
Bid to the council with to-morrow's dawn  
Th' Achæan chieftains all, speak forth thy mind,  
And take the Gods to witness of thy speech.  
Bid them be scattered each man to his own ;  
But for thy mother, if she craves to wed—  
Let her go home unto her mighty sire,  
And there the wedding let her kinsmen make,  
And grace it with a dower of goodly gifts,  
Such as beseem a daughter of their House.

Next, to thyself I give this counsel—take 330  
Thy swiftest galley with a score of men,  
And get thee forth to learn of thy lost sire,  
What news thou can'st, whether by human speech,  
Or by the voice of Zeus, who chief of all  
Gives tidings unto men. So first to Pylos  
Go, and have speech with Nestor, godlike king,  
And thence to Menelaus, fair-haired prince,  
In Sparta, him who latest from the host  
Hath from the war returned. Then if thou hear'st  
That thy lost sire yet lives and may come home, 340  
Thou may'st endure e'en for another year  
The wasting of thy house ; but if 'tis plain  
That he is dead and passed from mortal life,  
Return to Ithaca, heap high the mound,  
Pay the accustomed honours to the dead,  
And wed thy mother to some consort fit.  
But when thou hast brought all things to an end  
Then with thyself take counsel warily  
How thou may'st slay the Suitors in thy halls  
Whether by guile or force—and since thou'rt come 350  
To man's estate no longer play the child.  
Hast thou not heard what fame Orestes gat  
When he the slayer of his father slew,  
Crafty Ægisthus? so thou too my friend,  
Who strong of limb and comely art, be bold,  
That ages yet unborn may tell thy praise.

I to my bark will hie me where my crew  
Impatiently await me ; so take heed,  
And ponder all my sayings."

So she spake,

And to her speech Telemachus replied : 360

"Kindly and true, O stranger, are thy words ;  
Like counsel giv'n by Father to a son,  
And never shall they fade from out my mind.  
Yet stay awhile, though upon travel bent,  
And bathe and make thee merry ; then depart  
Unto thy bark, and take with thee a gift  
Goodly and precious, such as host to guest  
Is wont to give, an heirloom for all time."

To him the grey-eyed Goddess made reply ;

"Stay me not now when eager to be gone ; 370  
And for the gift, thy kindness would bestow,  
Keep it till my return ; then gladly I  
Will bear it home, and, precious though it be,  
'Twill bring a full reward."

The Goddess spake,

And like a bird that flies beneath the eaves,  
She vanished from his sight ; but in his heart  
Courage and strength she put, and more and more  
He of his sire took thought ; yet as he mused  
He marvelled, for he deemed a God was there.  
Anon unto the Suitors' band he went ; 380  
And unto them, as they in silence sat,

The noble minstrel sang the sad return  
Of the Achæan armament from Troy,  
As Pallas had ordained. Meanwhile o'erhead  
Icarius' daughter, wise Penelope,  
Heard in her bower the strain of that sweet lay,  
And down the steep stair came—yet not alone,  
But with two maidens in her train she came  
Near to the Suitors ; and the lady stood  
Beside the doorposts of that well-built hall. 390  
Over her face her glittering veil she drew,  
And whilst a handmaid stood on either side,  
Weeping she thus the glorious minstrel chode ;  
    “Phemius, who knowest well the strains that charm  
The ears of mortal men, who knowest too  
The deeds of Earth and Heaven, such as the bard  
Loves to rehearse, come sing us one of them,  
And let these men in silence quaff their wine ;  
But cease thou from this melancholy strain  
That wastes my inmost soul. With me abides 400  
An unforgotten sorrow for the loss  
Of my dear Hero, whose renown hath gone  
Through Hellas and mid Argos.”

So she spake,  
And wise Telemachus to her replied ;  
    “Nay, Mother mine, grudge not the bard his song,  
Whate'er he lists, and wherewithal he charms  
The hearts of men. 'Tis not in sooth the bard,

But Zeus, who causeth all these things to be—  
He who to all, that eat the bread of life,  
Divideth at his pleasure weal or woe. 410  
Small blame 'tis therefore to the bard to sing  
The misadventures of the Danaan host ;  
For men will ever praise that lay the best,  
That sounds the newest in their listening ears.  
Then take thou heart to hearken to his song,  
For not alone upon the plains of Troy  
Did our Odysseus forfeit life and home ;  
A throng of other chieftains fell beside.  
Now go within and mind thy woman's tasks  
The distaff and the loom, and bid thy maids 420  
Ply their appointed work ; for speech belongs  
Only to men, and chief of all to me,  
Who bear the sovereign headship of this House."

He spake, and much she marvelled as she turned  
Within the house, and in her heart laid up  
Her son's wise sayings ; but within her bower  
She with her handmaids for Odysseus mourned,  
Her well-loved husband, till upon her lids  
The grey-eyed Goddess poured delicious sleep.

Then through the shadowy halls the Suitors' crew 430  
Raised a tumultuous clamour, and each man  
Prayed to enjoy the favours of the Queen ;  
Till at the last Telemachus thus spoke ;

"Ye Suitors of my Mother, list my words—

Though beyond measure and unbearable  
Is this your arrogance, yet here in peace  
Feast we, nor let rough discord and harsh din  
Disturb our merrymaking ; for 'tis meet  
To hearken to a minstrel such as this,  
Whose strains might rival the Immortal Gods. 440  
But with the dawn we will in council meet,  
And there will I declare my plain resolve,  
That from these halls straightway ye get you gone  
And make you other feasts, and your own goods  
Waste as ye will, gadding from house to house.  
But if ye deem it in your arrogance  
Seemly to spoil another's heritage  
Because th' avenger tarrieth, spoil on ;  
And I will call upon th' Immortal Gods  
That Zeus may on you retribution bring, 450  
And ye may die the death within these halls."

He spake, and all that heard him bit their lips,  
And marvelled at his boldness ; but to him  
Eupeithes' son, Antinous, replied ;

"Surely Telemachus the gods themselves  
Have taught thee words, so boastful and so bold ;  
And never may it please the King of Heaven  
That thou in sea-girt Ithaca should'st reign,  
E'en though it be the birthright of thy race."

To him the sage Telemachus replied ; 460  
"Be thou not anger'd if I'm nothing loth



To take what Zeus may grant me ; nor methinks  
Is royal rule the least of human goods.  
Wealth to the palace follows in its train,  
And to the ruler glorious majesty.  
Many there are of the Achæan race  
Princes in Ithaca, both young and old—  
Let one of these the lord and sovereign be,  
For that Odysseus is no more ; but I  
Will rule my house and slaves whom my good sire 470  
Won for himself.”

To him Eurymachus

The son of Polybus replied :

“The chance

Of who shall reign in sea-girt Ithaca  
Lies in the lap of the Immortal Gods.  
Long may'st thou hold thine own and rule thy house ;  
Nor, while this land endures, may foeman come  
To spoil thy heritage. But tell us, friend,  
Who is this stranger, whence and from what land ?  
What is his lineage ? what his native fields ?  
Brings he the tidings that thy father comes ? 480  
Or is he here on errand of his own ?  
Sudden he came, sudden he went, nor staid  
That we might know him ; yet methinks his face  
Was all unlike the face of common man.”

To him Telemachus ;

“Nay, past all hope

Is my dear sire's return ; small trust have I  
In tidings, whencesoever ; little hope  
In divination or diviners, whom  
My lady Mother to the Palace bids,  
To question of the causes of her grief. 490  
From Taphos came the stranger, ancient guest  
Of my paternal house, Mentès y'clept,  
Son of the wise Anchialus and lord  
Of the seafaring Taphians."

So he spake,  
But in his secret heart he knew full well  
She was a Goddess. So to dance and song  
The Suitors turned them till the eventide ;  
And on their merriment black evening fell.  
Then to his house each Suitor took his way ;  
But to his chamber went Telemachus, 500  
A chamber built above the goodly court  
With a fair outlook ; there he sought his couch  
In meditation deep, and to him came  
Ops' daughter, Euryclea, the grandchild  
Of old Peisenor, bearing in her hand  
The blazing torches. Her in former days  
Laertes bought and for her gave the price  
Of twenty oxen. In the bloom of youth  
She was, and as his wife he honoured her,  
Yet ever kept him from the thought of love ; 510  
For much he feared his lady's jealousy.



Now to Telemachus she went and bare  
The flaming torches, for of all the house  
She most had loved him even from his birth ;  
And he threw ope the well-wrought chamber door,  
On his bed sat him, doffed his tunic soft  
And to his wise old nurse he threw the robe.  
She took and folded it and smoothed each crease,  
And hung it up beside the carvéd bed.  
Then forth she went, the silver ring she drew, 520  
And with the leathern latch made fast the door.  
Meanwhile enveloped in a woollen fleece,  
He sleepless pondered through the livelong night  
The journey, which Athené had ordained.



## BOOK II

## SUMMARY OF BOOK II

TELEMACHUS convenes the Ithacan Assembly, and he sets forth the violence and wrong-doing of the Suitors, one of whom, Antinous, replies by casting the blame on Penelope, and by explaining the arts by which she had eluded their importunity. Whilst they are thus engaged in debate Zeus, the Father and King of Gods, sends an awful portent in the shape of two eagles, who hover over the Assembly, and with their talons tear each other.

The omen is interpreted by Halisërthes, and is followed by a long and angry debate ; but Telemachus retires to the seashore, and prays to Athené, who appears to him in the guise of Mentor, and counsels him as to his voyage. Telemachus returns to the palace, instructs his old nurse Euryclea to prepare the stores for the journey, and to conceal his departure from his mother.

Meanwhile Athené takes on her the appearance of Telemachus, obtains a ship and crew, and sheds a strange sleep upon the Suitors in the midst of the banquet. She then resumes the form of Mentor, summons Telemachus and the crew on board ship, and they set sail for Pylos.

## BOOK II

Now when the rosy-fingered Dawn arose,  
Straight from his couch Odysseus' son upsprang,  
And donned his clothes and o'er his shoulder cast  
His keen-edged sword, and under his smooth feet  
He bound his shining sandals, and he strode  
Forth from his chamber like a very God.  
Straightway he bade the loud-tongued heralds call  
The long-haired Chieftains of th' Achæan folk  
To the assembly, and with scant delay  
They gathered to the call. To them thus met 10  
In full convention, came Telemachus,  
Bearing a brazen spear ; yet not alone,  
For at his heels two swift hounds followed close.  
On him Athené poured a wondrous grace,  
And all the people marvelled at the sight,  
When in his father's seat he sat him down.  
And the old men gave place, 'midst whom arose

Ægyptius mighty chief, bowed down with years,  
And skilled in endless lore. His son had sailed  
With great Odysseus in the hollow ships 20  
To Ilion far-famed land of steeds ; and him  
Named Antiphus, the savage Cyclops slew  
Within his rocky den, and on him made  
His last and latest meal. Three other sons  
Ægyptius had, of whom Eurynomus  
Consorted with the Suitors' company,  
While his two brothers kept their father's fields.  
Yet never did the old man cease to think  
And grieve for his lost son, and now with tears  
He spake unto his peers in council met ; 30

“ Give me your ears, ye men of Ithaca,  
Not since Odysseus sailed from Ithaca  
Hath there been council or convention held ;  
And now who bids us to this meeting ? Who  
Of young or old ? Hath any one here heard  
Tell of our host returning to their homes ?  
Or hath he aught touching the public weal  
Whereof he may plain declaration make ?  
Methinks a good and upright man he is ;  
Heaven's blessing rest upon him and may Zeus 40  
Grant him his heart's desire.”

Thus spake the Chief,  
And at his words Odysseus' son with joy  
Embraced the omen, and on fire to speak

Not long he kept his seat, but forth he stepped  
Full in the centre of the assembled Chiefs ;  
And in his hand Peisenor placed the staff,  
Peisenor wise in council. So he spake,  
But to the old man first his speech addressed ;

“Close by he stands, Old Man, as thou shalt know,  
Who hath convened this council. 'Tis myself, 50  
For on me grief lies hard. Nought have I heard  
Of our returning host, whereof in speech  
I may make declaration. Nought have I  
Touching the common weal to set forth here ;  
'Tis my own need, the sorrow of my house,  
That moves me to come here—a double grief.  
First, I have lost my sire, whilom your king,  
A gracious gentle sire ; and next I mourn  
For an affliction yet more hard to bear,  
One that shall make fell havoc of my house 60  
And waste my being. With unwelcome suit  
The sons of Chiefs, the noblest in the land,  
My Mother importune ; nor do they dare  
Go to her sire Icarius and sue  
With the accustomed bride-gifts for her hand,  
That he may choose amongst them whom he lists.  
But now all day they muster in my house,  
And slay the kine and sheep and fatted goats,  
And hold their revels and the red wine drink ;  
And all things go to waste, for there lives not 70

One like Odysseus who can save our House  
From desolation dire. Such are not We,  
But feeble from Our youth, unskilled in war.  
Yet would I drive them thence if I were strong,  
For past all bearing are the deeds they do,  
And they destroy my substance. O my friends  
Show your displeasure at these deeds of wrong,  
Respect your neighbours who dwell round, respect  
The anger of the Gods, lest in their wrath  
They turn and take requital for these acts. 80  
I pray ye by Olympian Zeus and Themis,  
By whom are gathered and by whom dissolved  
The Parliaments of men ; bear with me Friends,  
And suffer me in grief to waste away—  
Unless in sooth Odysseus my good sire  
Did ever wrong to the Achæan folk,  
And ye are fain to recompense the deed  
By stirring up these men against our House.  
But better were it ye had eaten up  
My household treasures and my flocks and herds ; 90  
For then had I perchance got recompense,  
And through the town we might have begged our way  
And prayed for restoration of our goods :  
But now the wrong ye do me is past cure.”

He spake in wrath with many a burning tear,  
And cast upon the ground the staff he bore.  
And pity fell on the assembled folk,



And silent all they stood ; nor was there one  
Who had the heart to chide Telemachus ;  
But in the end Antinous thus spake ; 100

“ Haughty of speech and unrestrained in wrath,  
What shame and wrong hast thou upon us cast !  
'Tis not the Suitors of Achæan blood,  
But thy too crafty mother is in fault.

Three years have gone, a fourth will soon be here  
Since first she vexed the hearts of our brave chiefs,  
Now with vain hope, and now with promise false,  
And now with message tempting each and all,  
While on far other thoughts her mind was set.

And yet again another wile she wrought, 110  
When in her bower she set a mighty web,  
In compass wide and delicate in woof ;  
And thus she spake ;

‘ Ye youths who seek my hand  
Now that the great Odysseus is no more,  
Howe'er intent upon my bridal, stay—  
Stay till my task is done, till this sad shroud  
On which I labour for Laertes' corse,  
Is wrought, and he bows to the stroke of death  
That lays men low ; so shall my woven web  
Not be in vain, so shall nor wife nor maid 120  
Among Achæan women give me blame,  
For that so great a prince should in his grave  
Unshrouded and unhonoured lie.’

Thus she  
Was wont to talk and we gave heed to her.  
But all day long she wove the mighty web  
And through the night by the bright torches' light,  
Her labours she undid, and for three years  
She by her craft beguiled th' Achæan chiefs.  
But when the circling hours the fourth year brought  
One of her women who knew all, disclosed 130  
The secret, and we came upon the Queen  
Unravelling her wondrous web ; then she  
Sorely against her will fulfilled her task.

Now hear the answer which the Suitors make,  
Thou and th' Achæans—hear and understand.  
Send forth thy mother, bid her wed with whom  
Her sire commands and her own heart is fain.  
But if she still is minded to work woe  
Amongst our people by her cunning wiles,  
Those gifts which she from wise Athené had, 140  
Knowledge of glorious handicraft, bright wit,  
And crafty thoughts, such as in time of yore  
No fair-tressed woman of Achæan race  
Desired—not Tyro nor Alcmene nor  
Fair-crowned Mycene—Yes far other were  
Their thoughts and purposes from those that haunt  
The evil conscience of Penelope—  
If still she be so minded, and her heart  
The Gods have hardened, be it as it may !

But know that they, the Suitors, will not cease 150  
From wasting of thy substance and thy goods.  
To her shall come imperishable fame,  
To thee the loss of livelihood and wealth ;  
But neither home nor elsewhere will we fare,  
Till some Achæan she shall choose and wed."

To him the sage Telemachus replied ;  
"Deem not that I will drive from out my doors  
Her who has borne and nursed me from a child,  
Whilst far away upon the face of earth,  
Whether alive or dead, my father is. 160  
And hard it were that to Icarius I  
Should compensation make, as needs I must,  
If I now send her forth. So from her sire,  
So from the God shall retribution come ;  
So too my mother, if she quits these halls,  
Shall with her curse invoke th' avenging fiends,  
And the dispraise of men shall find me out.  
Then know that I will never speak the word.  
But if your wrath burns hot, forth from my house !  
And make ye other feasts, and your own goods 170  
Waste as ye will, gadding from house to house.  
And if ye deem it in your arrogance  
Seemly to waste and spoil another's wealth,  
Because the avenger tarrieth, waste on !  
And I will call upon th' Immortal Gods  
That Zeus may on you retribution bring

And ye may die the death within these halls."

So spake Telemachus, and thundering Zeus  
Sent forth two eagles from the mountain crest ;  
And side by side in rivalry of wing 180  
Swift on the breath of wind they sped their flight.  
But when they came to where below them lay  
The place of loud debate, they wheeled their course,  
And flapped their sturdy pinions and looked down  
On those that were below ; and in their look  
Were death and desolation. Then they tore  
With their sharp talons each the other's breast,  
And to the right over the houses' tops  
Across the town they took their flight ; and men  
Much marvelled at the Portent that they saw, 190  
And pondered on the things which were to be.  
Then Halitherses, ancient chief, arose,  
The son of Mastor ; for alone he knew  
The mystic lore of birds, alone could speak  
The words of fate. In kindly, warning speech  
Thus did he say ;

"Ye men of Ithaca  
Give me your ears ; but chiefly do I speak  
Unto the Suitors, and to them show forth  
The things to be, for that upon them fast  
Rolleth a wave of trouble. Not long now 200  
Afar from friends Odysseus shall abide !  
He draweth near, and against these his foes

E'en now deviseth slaughter ; yea on all  
Who dwell in far-seen Ithaca great woe  
Most surely cometh. Wherefore while 'tis time  
Think how we may restrain them—nay in sooth,  
Let them themselves from evil-doing cease—  
So shall it vantage them. Dream not I speak  
Without th' unerring lore of prophecy ;  
For all shall be accomplished, as I told, 210  
What time the Argive host went up to war  
With wise Odysseus against Ilion's town.  
Then did I say that after many toils  
And loss of friends, forgotten by all men,  
He in the twentieth year should home return.  
And now all things haste to th' appointed end."

He spake and straight Eurymachus replied ;  
"Go home, old man, and croak thy prophecies  
Unto thy babes, lest haply they get harm,  
And know that I a better prophet am. 220  
Many the fowls that fly in the sun's light,  
Yet are they not all birds of prophecy.  
Odysseus is no more ; far off he lies,  
And much I wish that thou wert with him laid.  
Then would'st thou not come babbling prophecies,  
Nor stir Telemachus to greater wrath,  
Looking, methinks, for some reward of him.  
Yet know for sure, if by thy greater age  
And deeper lore thou angerest the youth,

He shall have greater sorrow, nor shall they 230  
To whom he looks avail him, whilst on thee—  
On thee—old man, we will a forfeit lay  
Such as shall vex thy soul and bring thee woe.  
And here I offer to Telemachus  
This counsel—let him send his mother home ;  
And there the wedding shall be furnished forth,  
And all the gifts be given, which beseem  
A marriage with the daughter of the House.  
For from their suit, unwelcome though it be,  
The sons of the Achæans ne'er will cease. 240  
We fear no man, neither Telemachus,  
Nor his long speeches ; nor will we give heed,  
Old dotard, to thy idle prophecies,  
Idle and yet most hateful ; for know this—  
So long as she delays her wedding day,  
So long will we devour his goods, nor make  
Return or recompense, while day by day  
We linger here contending for the prize  
Of her fair excellence, nor seek the love  
Of other women, as 'twere meet we did." 250

To him the sage Telemachus replied ;  
"Eurymachus and all whoe'er ye be,  
Illustrious Suitors, neither prayer nor word  
Shall pass beyond my lips. Th' Immortal Gods  
And the Achæan people know my thoughts.  
But give me a swift ship and score of men,



Who on the voyage, whereupon I go,  
Shall bear me to and fro ; for I am bound  
To sandy Pylos and to Sparta's Court,  
To seek for tidings of my long lost sire ; 260  
If it so hap that one of mortal men  
Can tell of his return, or that the voice  
Of Zeus, whence come the tidings of all things,  
Shall sound within mine ears. So if I hear  
That he yet lives and will return, then I  
May bear my burden for a full year more.  
But if 'tis plain that he no longer lives,  
I'll get me back unto my native land,  
Heap high the mound, and o'er it pay the dues  
Of funeral honour to the mighty dead. 270  
Then will I give away my Mother's hand."

He spake and sat him down ; but then arose  
Mentor the comrade of Odysseus—he  
To whom the blameless Chief when bound for Troy  
Gave charge of all his household, and ordained  
That all should give him reverence, and that he  
Should watch and ward the house. With kindly speech  
The old man thus began ;

" List to my words,

Ye men of Ithaca—henceforth I pray  
May never sceptered King again be mild, 280  
Gentle or righteous in his polity ;  
But let him rule in harsh unrighteousness,



If now Odysseus, who, like loving sire  
Reigned o'er his people, is forgot by them.  
Unto these lordly Suitors I grudge not  
Their lawless acts and ill imaginings.  
'Tis at the cost of their own lives they spoil  
The substance of Odysseus, while they dream  
That he shall ne'er return ; but I am wroth,  
Wroth with the people who sit silent all, 290  
Nor find the voice to chide nor will to stay  
These Suitors from their purpose—shame it is  
Although so many 'gainst so few they be."

To him Euenor's son Leocritus  
Made answer thus ;

"O witless and unwise,  
What means this speech of thine to raise the folk  
And stay us from our purpose ? Ill it is  
To fight about a banquet, doubly ill,  
To fight 'gainst odds. Nay if Odysseus' self  
Were to come home again and sought to drive 300  
These Suitors from his halls, 'twould scarcely please  
His fond and loving wife to see his face ;  
Nor would he 'scape a shameful overthrow  
If 'gainst such odds he fought. So foolishly  
Hast thou advised. Now each man to his home !  
As for Telemachus, let Mentor now  
And Halisërthes, speed him on his way,  
The ancient friends and comrades of his House.

Not that in sooth such voyage e'er shall be—  
'Twere best to wait his news in Ithaca." 310

He spake and with the word the Council rose,  
And each man went unto his own abode,  
But to Odysseus' halls the Suitors came.

Alone Telemachus stood on the beach  
And in the hoary ocean bathed his hands,  
And to Athené prayed ;

"O hear me, thou,  
Goddess, who yesterday did'st seek our halls,  
And bad'st me sail across the misty main,  
In quest of tidings of my long lost sire.  
All Greece delayeth me, but most of all 320  
The Suitors in their overweening pride."

So prayed he and Athené was at hand,  
In form and voice like Mentor by his side,  
And spake the winged words ;

"Henceforth nor weak  
Nor unwise shall thou be, if but one drop  
Of thy great father's blood runs in thy veins,  
Such as he was in every deed and word—  
And then thy journey shall not fruitless be,  
Nor unaccomplished ; but if thou art not  
Son of Odysseus and Penelope, 330  
Then small the chance that thou shalt have thy wish.  
Few are the sons who like their fathers are ;  
Some few perchance exceed, the larger part

Come far behind their sires in excellence.  
Yet forasmuch as thou art neither weak,  
Nor of Odysseus' wisdom all bereft,  
Good hope there is that thou wilt do this work.  
Wherefore heed not the counsel and device  
Of these insensate Suitors. Fools they are  
And void of justice ! Little do they think 340  
Of the black death and doom so near at hand,  
And that they all shall perish in a day—  
But for the voyage, whereon thou art set,  
It is not now far distant ; I myself,  
Thy father's trusty friend, will find the ship  
And be thy comrade. Wherefore get thee home  
And join the Suitors ; then provide the corn  
In vessels for the journey, wine in jars,  
And flour that giveth marrow to men's bones,  
In the thick skins ; whilst I will range the land 350  
And gather for thee a right willing crew.  
And forasmuch as there are many ships  
In sea-girt Ithaca, both old and new,  
I'll choose the best, fit her with all she needs,  
And we will launch her on the broad-wayed deep."

So spake Athené, child of Zeus ; nor long  
Tarried Telemachus, when he had heard  
The counsel of the Goddess. Sore at heart  
He went unto his house and there he found  
The lordly Suitors. Some were flaying goats 360

And some were singeing swine ; straightway to him  
With laugh and jest Antinous strode forth,  
And clasped his hand and called on him by name ;

“ Haughty of speech and unrestrained in wrath,  
Away,” he said, “ with angry word and act,  
And feast and drink with us as thou wert wont ;  
Meanwhile th’ Achæan people shall prepare  
All for thy voyage, ship and chosen crew,  
That thou may’st sail to Pylos and there learn  
News of thy noble father.”

But to him 370

Telemachus replied ;

“ Nay not with thee  
And with thy comrades insolent will I  
Sit down and make me merry at the feast.  
Is’t not enough that while I was a child  
Ye plundered all my substance ? But know this  
That now that I have come to man’s estate,  
And from the mouth of others learnt the tale,  
Of all my wrongs, and that my heart grows strong,  
I will let loose upon you every curse,  
Unto the utmost limits of my power, 380  
Whether in Pylos or in this my land.  
And now I get me hence—a passenger  
On board another’s ship, for so methinks  
Ye have decreed ; yet this full well I know  
Not unavailing shall my voyage be.”

He said, and with the word he snatched his hand  
From out the other's grasp ; but with sharp gibe  
The Suitors as they sat within at meat  
Mocked him, and thus would one to other say  
Of the o'erbearing youths ;

“ Lo see you here 390

How now Telemachus doth plot our death !  
Is it from sandy Pylos that he brings  
His friends and allies or from Sparta's land—  
In grievous earnest is his purpose set—  
Or fares he forth to Ephyra's rich glebe,  
To cull some deadly drug which he may pour  
Into our cups and do us all to death !”  
And then some other of the haughty crew  
Would scoffingly reply ;

“ Who knows if he

Will not sail forth aboard his ship and die, 400  
Afar from friends a wanderer like his sire ?  
So shall he plague us yet more by his death,  
For we must needs divide his goods and give  
His house unto his Mother and her mate.”

Such was their converse ; but Telemachus  
Down to his Father's spacious treasury,  
A lofty vaulted chamber, took his way.  
There gold and brass were heaped, and raiment  
stored  
In coffers, there the fragrant olive oil,

And there the casks of old and generous wine 410  
Pure and unmixed stood ranged along the wall,  
Waiting the time Odysseus should return,  
Albeit from many toils and sufferings.  
Shut were those folding and close-fastened doors,  
And day and night a house-dame sat within,  
And by her wisdom kept good watch of all,  
Old Euryclea named, daughter of Ops,  
Peisenor's son. To her Telemachus ;

“Good mother draw me of the sweetest wine  
Thou hast here in these jars—next best to that, 420  
Which for my hapless sire thou keep'st in charge,  
If e'er the heaven-born Chief should home return ;  
Escaped from death and doom. Fill me twelve jars,  
And on them close the lids, then in tough skins  
Stow me away the well-ground barley meal,  
Twenty full measures of fine barley meal.  
Make all things ready, guard my secret well,  
And when the shades of evening fall around,  
And to her bower my Lady Mother goes  
Unto her rest, then will I take the stores ; 430  
For I am bound for Pylos' sandy shore  
And Sparta's Court, to gather if I may  
Some tidings of my well-loved sire.”

He spake ;

But the good nurse broke forth in bitter wail,  
And thus made lamentation ;



“Why, dear one,  
Hath this wild purpose come into thine heart?  
How wilt thou go o’er the broad face of earth  
Who art an only and belovéd child?  
Afar from country on a foreign strand  
Thy noble father hath surrendered life ; 440  
And soon as thou art gone thy foes will plot  
Against thee to thy ruin, and will part  
Thy goods among them. Rest thee then at home  
In these thy lands ; it boots thee not to roam  
Over the barren sea and suffer woe.”

To her the sage Telemachus replied ;  
“Courage, Good Nurse, for of the God himself  
Comes this my purpose ; wherefore swear an oath  
That to my Mother thou wilt nought declare,  
Till the eleventh or twelfth day shall dawn, 450  
Or till she hear the news that I am gone.  
I would not she should mar her loveliness  
With tears of grief.”

He spake, and by the Gods  
The aged woman sware a mighty oath.  
So when the oath was fully sworn, she stored  
The wine in jars, the barley meal in skins ;  
And to his halls Telemachus returned,  
And mingled with the Suitors’ company.

On other thoughts the grey-eyed Goddess bent,  
In form and figure of Telemachus, 460



Passed through the town and stood beside each man,  
And bade them gather with the close of day  
On board the swift ship, which herself had craved  
Of the illustrious son of Phronius,  
Noemon, who bestowed her willingly.  
So the sun set and all Earth's ways grew dark.

Then at her word they launched the gallant ship ;  
And all the tackle which a well-decked bark  
Needs for her voyage they within her stored,  
And straightway moored her at the harbour's head. 470  
Quick to her side gathered the stalwart crew,  
And as they came each man the Goddess cheered  
Unto his work.

And now once more her thoughts  
To other purposes Athené set,  
And to Odysseus' halls she turned her steps.  
There on the Suitors' eyes she shed sweet sleep  
And mazed them as they drank, and struck the cups  
From out their hands. Short time around the board  
They sat, for sleep had on their eyelids fallen,  
And they rose up, and through the city went 480  
To get them rest. Then did Athené call  
Telemachus from out his pleasant halls,  
And like to Mentor in her form and voice,

“Lo now Telemachus,” she said, “thy friends  
Sit at their oars and only wait for thee,  
To speed them on their voyage. Let us go

Nor suffer them to linger."

So she spake  
And swiftly led the way, whilst he behind  
Close followed in her footsteps. So they came  
Unto the shore and there they found the ship 490  
And the long-haired companions of their toils,  
To whom Telemachus thus boldly spake ;

"Come friends and bear our stores aboard ; e'en now  
All things lie ready in the house, and nought  
Is known unto my Mother or her maids.  
To one alone have I my purpose told."

He spake, and led the way ; they followed close,  
And in obedience to their Chief's commands  
They stowed the stores. Then stepped Telemachus  
On board ship ; but Athené went before, 500  
And by the stern she sat her down, and he  
Stayed by her side. Swift slacked the ropes the crew,  
And clomb aboard and sat them on the thwarts ;  
And fresh and free the favouring west wind blew,  
Sent for the love Athené bore to them,  
And o'er the dark blue waters sung the breeze.

Then cheered Telemachus his crew amain,  
And bade them grasp the tackle ; they obeyed,  
Raised the tall mast of pine and slipped it home  
Into its socket, and made fast the stays, 510  
And hoisted the white sail with ropes of hide.  
Then swelled the canvas with the freshening gale,

The dark wave hissed around the rushing prow,  
And o'er the main, accomplishing her path,  
The vessel sped along. So, every rope  
Drawn tight in the black ship, they filled their cups  
With wine unto the brim, and to the Gods,  
The ever-living Gods, libation made ;  
But chief of all they to Athené poured  
The grey-eyed child of Zeus. Thus through the  
                  night  
And eke the dawn the vessel cleft her way.



# BOOK III

### SUMMARY OF BOOK III

TELEMACHUS, with Athené in the form of Mentor, lands on the sea-shore at Pylos, where Nestor and his family are offering sacrifice to Poseidon. Telemachus makes himself known to Nestor, and asks for news of his father.

Nestor tells how, at the close of the Trojan War, he came home, and how Odysseus and the rest of the host lingered on to please Agamemnon ; and he relates the story of Agamemnon's murder by Ægisthus and Clytemnestra. He also tells how Menelaus was driven by stress of weather to Egypt, and is now in goodly Lacedæmon. He counsels Telemachus to go there and ask news of him.

Then Athené departs in the form of a sea-eagle, and Nestor, recognising the Goddess, offers to her on the following day the sacrifice of a heifer with gilded horns, after which Telemachus, accompanied by Peisistratus, the son of Nestor, starts on his journey to Sparta.

### BOOK III

Now did the sun leave the fair watery waste  
And to the brazen Heaven upsprang, that he  
Might shed his light on Gods and men who dwell  
Upon the fruitful earth. Anon they came  
To Pylos, Neleus' massive fortalice ;  
And they might see, as they drew nigh the shore,  
The people offering black spotless bulls  
Unto th' Earth-shaking and the black-haired God.  
Five rows there were, in each five hundred men,  
And in each band nine bulls for sacrifice. 10  
Scarce had they tasted of the inward meat,  
And in the sacred flame consumed the thighs,  
When straight upon the beach the shipmen bore,  
And furled the sails and brought the ship to land,  
And stepped ashore. Followed Telemachus.  
Athené went before, and first to him  
The Goddess spake ;



“No need of bashfulness,  
For, for this purpose hast thou sailed the seas,  
To learn the tidings in what land thy sire  
Lies hid, or by what death he met his fate. 20  
But come now get thee hence unto the halls  
Of Nestor skilled in horsemanship, and learn  
What counsel in his breast he holds, and pray  
That he will tell to thee the very truth ;  
Nor will he speak deceit, for he is wise.”

To her the sage Telemachus replied ;  
“Nay, Mentor, how may I before him come,  
Or greet him—I who have no skill in speech ?  
It ill beseemeth youth to question eld.”

To him the grey-eyed Goddess answer made ; 30  
“Fear not, Telemachus ; in part thy words  
Shall spring from thine own mind, and part the God  
Shall put into thy mouth ; thou wert not born  
And nurtured under unpropitious Fates.”

Athené spake, and swiftly led the way ;  
He in her footsteps followed ; so they came  
Unto the Council of the Pylian chiefs.  
There Nestor sat and Nestor’s sons, and round  
His company were gathered to the feast.  
Some of the meat was roasting, some on spits 40  
Was ready ; but when they the strangers saw,  
In hospitable throng they pressed around,  
And bade them sit them down, and clasped their hands.

Then first the son of Nestor drew him near,  
Peisistratus, and clasped the hand of each,  
And made them sit on the soft fleeces strown  
For them that feasted on the sandy shore,  
And placed them by his brother and his sire.  
Then portions of the inward meat he gave,  
And in a golden goblet poured the wine ; 50  
And as he pledged Athené, child of Zeus,  
Of Zeus the Ægis-bearer, thus he spake ;

“To King Poseidon, Stranger, make thy prayer,  
For to his banquet ye to-day have come,  
And when, as fit it is, thy prayer is made,  
And thy libation poured, then pass the cup  
To this thy friend, who too methinks doth pray  
To the Immortals, for the man lives not  
Who needeth not the favour of the Gods.  
But inasmuch as thou the elder art, 60  
And that his age is even as mine own,  
First do I pass to thee this golden cup.”

He spake and in her hands he placed the cup,  
And in his wisdom and his righteousness  
The Goddess took delight, for that he first  
Had offered it to her, and straightway she  
Prayed to Poseidon.

“Hear me Thou,” she said,  
“Who girdlest round the Earth, nor to our prayer  
Grudge the fulfilment of this work of ours.

First give renown to Nestor and his sons, 70  
Then to each Pylian chief a recompense  
For this illustrious hecatomb, and last  
Grant to Telemachus and me, that we  
May home return, our purpose perfected,  
For therefore came we in our gallant ship."

The Goddess spake, and meantime as she prayed  
She gave herself fulfilment to her prayer,  
And to Telemachus she passed the cup,  
A fair and double goblet ; and he too  
Prayed in like fashion. When the outward meat 80  
Was duly roasted and drawn off the spits  
They made division of the savoury mess,  
And feasted till each man had ta'en his fill  
Of meat and drink ; and then Gerenia's lord,  
Nestor for horsemanship far famed, thus spake ;

"Now that these strangers in our feast have shared,  
'Tis meet that we should learn what men they be.  
Strangers, say then, who are ye, whence ye come  
Sailing across the ocean's watery ways ;  
Is it for gain or some wild enterprise 90  
Ye roam, like rovers, o'er the briny main ?  
For they in sooth at peril of their lives,  
And bearing misery to other men,  
Are wont to wander o'er the sea."

To him

Boldly and well Telemachus replied,

Because on him Athené had bestowed  
Courage, that of his sire he might enquire,  
And get him praise and honour among men ;

“ O Nestor, son of Neleus, thou who art  
The pride of the Achæans, thou dost ask 100  
From whence we are ; and I will tell thee all.

From Ithaca, that lies beneath the shade  
Of Neion's mighty mountain, are we come,  
On private, not on public, enterprise ;  
For I am on the track of the far fame  
Of great Odysseus my much suffering sire,  
Who fought with thee against the town of Troy,  
And took and sacked it, if report be true.  
Full tidings we have heard of all the host  
That warred at Troy, where and how each one fell ; 110

But Zeus hath veiled His fate in mystery,  
And none may say where our Odysseus died ;  
Whether on land, by foemen, or on sea,  
Sunk in the depths of Amphitrite's waves.

Wherefore I do beseech thee to relate  
The story of his death, if haply thou  
Thyself did'st see it, or did'st hear the tale  
From other wanderers. Surely was he born

To great affliction ! Furthermore I pray  
Speak not soft words from pity or respect, 120  
But tell me truly how thou sawest him.

O if of yore Odysseus, my good sire,

In word and deed was faithful to his troth  
In Troy, where ye Achæans suffered woe,  
Now bear all this in mind and tell me true."

To him made answer skilled in horsemanship  
Nestor, Gerenia's Lord ;

"O friend, methinks

Thou hast awakened the old grief, which we,  
The sons of the Achæans fierce and strong,  
Endured, when we were wandering o'er the main 130  
In quest of booty, where Achilles led,  
Or when we fought round Priam's mighty town.  
Ah ! there how many of our noblest fell.  
There valiant Aias, there Achilles died,  
There fell Patroclus, equal to the Gods  
In wise deliberation, there my son  
Blameless and strong, my loved Antilochus,  
So fleet of foot so stout in battle's hour.  
But other griefs we bore. Who amongst men  
Can tell the record? Wert thou to abide 140  
Here for five years or six, methinks the tale  
Of all our sufferings would be yet untold,  
And sad and weary thou would'st go thy way.

For nine long years we busily devised  
The ruin of our foes, and scarce did Zeus  
Grant us to compass it ; but of our host  
None could Odysseus match in excellence  
Of stratagem and craft. Thy mighty Sire

Surpassed all others, if indeed thou art  
A son of his ; and surely as I gaze, 150  
I marvel at thy speech so like to his ;  
Marvel a younger man can know to speak  
So like unto his elder. Now in sooth  
So long as he and I together were,  
Nor in assembly large nor council strict  
Were we in aught divided ; with one mind,  
One counsel we advised the Argive host  
What best might vantage them. But when high Troy  
Was overthrown, we went aboard our ships,  
And the God scattered us upon the deep. 160  
And then did Zeus decree the Argive Host  
A sad returning, for of that array  
All were not wise nor righteous, and on them—  
And many were they—came the deadly wrath  
Of Her, the grey-eyed Goddess, child of Zeus,  
Who 'twixt the sons of Atreus set great strife.  
Then gathered at the rash and reckless call  
Of those two chiefs, what time the sun went down,  
The sons of the Achæans ; but with wine  
Heavy and gross they came, and the two kings 170  
Declared the reason wherefore they were met.  
So Menelaus bade th' assembled host  
Take thought for their return across the sea,  
But ill that counsel Agamemnon pleased.  
He sought to stay them and whole hecatombs



To offer to Athené to appease  
The Goddess' dread displeasure. Fool to dream  
That he could change her purpose, or could turn  
Thus lightly from their mind th' Immortal Gods !  
So with rough words each with the other strove, 180  
And with a shout the armed Achæan host  
Sprang to their feet, into two factions rent.  
And thinking evil of each other there  
We spent the livelong night, for Zeus the while  
Was shaping our destruction ; but with dawn  
We launched our ships and in them placed our goods  
And our deep-girdled captives. There one half  
Were fain with Agamemnon to abide,  
The son of Atreus, shepherd of the host,  
And one half put to sea. Swiftly we sailed 190  
O'er the depths teeming with their monstrous broods,  
For the God lulled the angry waves to rest,  
And unto Tenedos we came and sought  
With prayer and sacrifice a safe return.  
But in the counsels of almighty Zeus  
Return had found no place. A second strife  
The unrelenting Deity aroused,  
And they of wise Odysseus' company,  
To do a pleasure unto Atreus' son,  
With him turned back their high-prowed ships to  
shore. 200  
But I with all the barks that followed me



Fled, for I knew the purpose of the God.  
Fled too with all his band brave Tydeus' son ;  
And last came Menelaus, fair-haired prince,  
Who found us lingering in Lesbos' isle,  
Pondering our voyage long and difficult—  
Whether to seaward of the crags of Chios  
By Psyria's isle, keeping it on our left,  
Or inside Chios and past windy Mimas,  
We should now steer our course. So of the God 210  
We asked a sign to guide us, and a sign  
He gave, and bade us strike across mid sea  
Unto Eubœa, and with utmost speed  
Flee from destruction. Then a piping wind  
Arose, and o'er the teeming depths our ships  
Ran swiftly and with night-fall came to land  
Beside Geræstus ; where in thankfulness  
For our sea perils past we sacrificed  
Bulls without stint unto the ocean God.  
'Twas the fourth day ere Diomed, the son 220  
Of Tydeus, and his friends had moored their ships  
Within the port of Argos ; I meanwhile  
To Pylos held my course, nor failed the wind,  
Since first the God commissioned it to blow.  
So all unknowing of the fate of those  
Amongst th' Achæan host who 'scaped or died,  
Hither, dear child, I came ; yet whatsoe'er  
Of tidings, since within these halls I sat

Have reached my ears, 'tis meet that thou should'st  
know,

Nor will I aught conceal. Safe to their homes 230

Have come the Myrmidons, those spearmen staunch ;

Safe too came Philoctetes, Poias' son ;

And safe Idomeneus brought back to Crete

His comrades. These all 'scaped the battle-field

Nor did the deep sea claim one as his own.

Moreover ye have heard, albeit afar,

Of Agamemnon, how he gat him home,

And how Ægisthus compassed his o'erthrow,

And paid the forfeit of his treachery.

Ah well, methinks, it is the dead should leave 240

Behind him such a son, even as he,

Who did to death his father's murderer,

Crafty Ægisthus. Likewise thou, my son,

Who art so strong and fair, be of good heart

That men in after times may speak thee well."

To him the wise Telemachus replied ;

"O Nestor, son of Neleus, thou who art

The pride of the Achæans ; He in sooth

Took vengeance on his foe, and far and wide

His fame shall go among th' Achæan folk 250

To generations yet unborn ; but me,

Would that to me the Gods would grant such strength,

That I too might avenge me of the wrong

Done by those haughty Suitors, and requite

The base imaginations of their hearts.  
But not for me nor for my sire the Gods  
Have woven such a web of happiness,  
And I must needs be patient."

So he spake

And Nestor of Gerenia answer made ;

"My friend, thy speech hath brought unto my mind <sup>260</sup>  
The story of these doings, for they say  
That many Suitors for thy Mother's hand  
In thy despite are plotting in thy halls  
Evil against thee ; say then if in truth  
Thou givest place unto them willingly,  
Or do thy people, moved by the dark speech  
Of some Divinity, abhor thy rule ?  
And yet who knows whether or no thy sire,  
Or by himself or with the Achæan host,  
May come again and compensation claim <sup>270</sup>  
For violence and wrong ? Would that the love  
And favour which the grey-eyed Goddess had,  
What time in Trojan land we suffered sore,  
For thy great Sire, she now would show to thee.  
For never have I seen th' Immortal Gods  
Show open favour to the sons of men,  
Such as Athené to Odysseus showed.  
Yes, if she deigned to love thee in such wise,  
Methinks these Suitors would take little care  
To importune thy Mother with their suit." <sup>280</sup>

To him the wise Telemachus replied ;  
“ Old man, I greatly marvel at thy speech.  
Yet sure thy words shall never come to pass,  
Not though I hope, not though th’ Immortal Gods  
Themselves desire it, shall it ever be.”

He said and straight the grey-eyed Goddess spake ;  
“ What words are these, Telemachus, to ’scape  
Beyond the guarded portal of thy lips ?  
Surely the God may save whom he so will,  
E’en though afar he be. Rather would I 290  
Endure long sorrow and great toil abroad  
And late in safety see my home again,  
Than swiftly now return and swiftly fall  
Beside my hearth, as Agamemnon fell  
By his own wife and by Ægisthus’ hand.  
Not e’en the Gods can ward from whom they love  
Death the familiar heritage of man,  
When the far reaching doom doth lay him low.”

To her the wise Telemachus replied ;  
“ Speak we no more, O Mentor, on such theme, 300  
Though sorrowful we be ; false is the tale  
Of his returning, and e’en now the Gods  
Are planning for him the black doom of death.  
Yet will I ask of Nestor this one thing—  
For he hath knowledge above mortal men  
Of justice and of wisdom, and they say  
That his long reign hath measured three times o’er

The span of human life ; and sure he looks  
Like an Immortal. Wherefore tell the tale,  
O Nestor, son of Neleus, in what wise 310  
Died Agamemnon, Atreus' mighty son ;  
Where too was Menelaus, and what craft,  
What deadly craft was that, which for the Prince  
Ægisthus planned ; who butchered there a man  
Far worthier than himself. Sure on that day  
Afar from Argos Menelaus was  
A wanderer upon earth, what time the wretch  
Took heart and royal Agamemnon slew."

To him Gerenia's Lord made answer thus ;  
" Yes, I will tell the truth of all, dear child ; 320  
And in good sooth thy guess hath gone aright  
Of what had been, if coming fresh from Troy  
The fair-haired prince had found Ægisthus there  
Alive within those halls. Not e'en his corse  
Methinks had had the sepulture of earth  
Heaped o'er him, but the dogs and unclean birds  
Had torn him as he lay upon the plain,  
Far from the Town ; nor had th' Achæan maids  
Made lamentation o'er him ; for he wrought  
A heinous crime. For so it came to pass 330  
While we endured th' extremities of toil  
Encamped by Troy, he skulked ingloriously  
In some dark corner of horse-breeding Argos,  
And tempted Agamemnon's wife with speech

Of honied sweetness. She at his first words  
Gave no consent unto the deed of shame ;  
For she was strong in steadfastness of heart,  
And by her side there was a bard, to whom  
Atreides, when he sailed to Troy, gave charge  
To watch and ward his wife. But when the doom 340  
Of Heaven had bound her in resistless bonds,  
Then did Ægisthus lead the minstrel forth  
Unto a desert isle to be the spoil  
And prey of bird and beast, and to his home  
He willing bore his not unwilling bride.  
But on the holy altars of the Gods  
He burnt the thighs of beasts, and in the shrines  
Hung up the offerings of his thankfulness,  
The golden image and the woven robe,  
For that a deed beyond his utmost hope 350  
Had been accomplished. Meanwhile o'er the sea  
I and the son of Atreus held our way,  
As loving friends returning from the war.  
But when we came to Sunium's sacred steep,  
Th' Athenian headland, there with his mild shafts  
Apollo smote the steersman, whilst his hand  
Was on the helm of Menelaus' bark,  
As o'er the waves she flew, Phrontis y'clept,  
Son of Onetor. Better was there none  
Among the sons of men to steer a ship, 360  
When storm-winds gather thick. So there awhile,



Albeit much craving to be on his way,  
The chieftain tarried till the latest rites  
Were to his comrade paid. But when at length  
Fast faring o'er the dark blue sea his bark  
Had reached Malea's headland, deep-voiced Zeus  
There for the Prince ordained a troublous path,  
Loosing the shrill breath of the boisterous winds,  
And piling up the swelling waves that seemed  
Like mountains in their height. There by His will <sup>370</sup>  
The fleet was torn in twain—some drave to Crete,  
Where by the waters of Iardanus  
Dwell the Cydonian folk. There is a cliff  
Which rises steep and sheer from out the sea,  
By the Gortynian border ; the south wind  
On the left headland drives the vasty surge,  
Tow'rds Phæstus and a little rock keeps back  
The angry waters. On those cruel reefs  
Part of our fleet was dashed, and scarce the crews  
'Scaped with their lives ; yet borne by wind and wave <sup>380</sup>  
To Egypt's shore five dark-prowed galleys came ;  
And Menelaus wandered with his fleet  
'Mid a strange people, gathering store of wealth,  
While secretly Ægisthus in his halls  
Planned Agamemnon's death and made the folk  
To serve him. So for seven full years he ruled  
In rich Mycenæ, but in the eighth year  
From Athens came Orestes, noble prince,



Like some avenging pest, and did to death  
The slayer of his father, and there made 390  
Over his mother and her craven mate  
A funeral banquet in the Argive land.  
And on the self-same day with a rich freight  
Came Menelaus of the war-cry loud.

Then linger not, my friend, afar from home,  
Nor leave the haughty stranger to devour  
The substance of thy House, and so forsooth  
Thy journey be in vain. My counsel is  
That thou to Menelaus should'st repair ;  
For he hath lately come from distant lands— 400  
So distant none might hope to find return,  
If once the storm should bear him out to sea—  
A broad and mighty sea, most terrible,  
From which not e'en the fowls of Heaven themselves  
May in a twelvemonth wing their airy way.  
So get thee hence with comrades and with ship ;  
Or if thy pleasure 'tis to go by land  
Thou shalt have horse and chariot, and my sons  
To Lacedæmon shall thy escort be,  
Where fair-haired Menelaus hath his home. 410  
Entreat the truth of him ; he will not lie  
For he is wise."

He said, and with the words  
The sun went down and darkness fell around.  
Then spake the grey-eyed Goddess ;

“O old man,  
Well hast thou spoken ; so let us forthwith  
Sever the victims’ tongues, and mix the wine,  
That to Poseidon and the deathless Gods  
We may make offering ere the hour of sleep.  
The light of day is hid beneath the west,  
Nor at a banquet of the Immortal Gods 420  
May we long linger. ’Tis full time to go.”

So spake the Child of Zeus, and they gave heed.  
The heralds poured the water o’er their hands,  
And youths filled high the bowls ; but in each cup  
They made libation of some part, then served  
Freely to all around, and in the fire  
They cast the severed tongues, and rising up  
They sprinkled on the flame the votive juice.

The rites were done, the guests had drunk their fill ;  
And now Athené and Telemachus 430  
Were minded to return on board their bark ;  
But Nestor stayed them, and with courteous speech  
“May Zeus,” he said, “and all th’ Immortal Gods  
Forbid that ye should from this house depart,  
As though its master were some needy man,  
And had nor raiment nor rich coverlets,  
Wherein his guests and he may softly sleep.  
Nay, I have many and exceeding fair ;  
And never whilst I live or children leave  
Within these walls to welcome stranger friends, 440

Shall the dear son of this Odysseus sleep  
Upon his galley's deck."

He spake, and thus  
The grey-eyed Goddess answer made ;

" Full well  
Hast spoken, good old man. Telemachus  
Shall hearken, as is meet, and fare with thee  
To take his rest within thy halls ; but I  
On board our ship will go to cheer the crew,  
And tell them all ; for I their elder am,  
And they are youths in age and fellowship  
Like to Telemachus, and follow him 450  
With loving service. So by our black ship  
I will take needful rest ; but with the dawn  
For the high-souled Cauconians I am bound,  
For there a debt is due to me from them,  
A debt nor new nor small. Meanwhile do thou  
Send on this royal youth, since for this cause  
He to the shelter of thy roof hath come,  
With chariot and the escort of thy son,  
And steeds of fleetest pace and greatest power."

The Goddess spake, and vanished from their sight 460  
Like a sea-eagle. Then on every mind  
Fell great amazement ; but the aged King  
Much marvelled as he gazed and took the hand  
Of young Telemachus and thus he spake ;  
" Surely nor weak nor craven shalt thou be,

Dear friend, if thus th' Immortal Gods vouchsafe  
To guard and guide thee in thy time of youth.  
For of those blessed ones, who dwell in Heaven,  
This was none other than the Child of Zeus,  
Tritogeneia, of surpassing fame, 470  
She that so honoured thy illustrious sire  
Amongst the Argive people. Hear me then,  
Be gracious, mighty Queen, grant me renown  
To me, my children, and my noble wife ;  
And on thine altar I will sacrifice  
A yearling heifer, broad-browed and untamed,  
With gilded horns who ne'er hath bent her neck  
Beneath the yoke."

So prayed he, and the prayer  
Was by Athené heard. Then Nestor rose,  
Gerania's warrior Lord, and led his sons 480  
And sons-in-law unto his stately home ;  
But when they came within those far-famed halls,  
And sat them down on couch and chair of state,  
Each marshalled in his place, the aged Prince  
Mixed for his guests a goblet of sweet wine,  
Which in th' eleventh year the house-dame broached  
Loosing the wine-jar's lid. Then the old man  
Mixed the full bowl, and to Athené prayed,  
Daughter of Zeus the Ægis-bearing Lord.  
Now when libation had been duly made 490  
And all had drunk their fill, homeward each man

Departed ; but Gerenia's Horseman Lord  
Stayed young Telemachus, and made him sleep  
On carved bedstead 'neath the sounding porch,  
And by his side Peisistratus his son,  
Good with the ashen spear, a prince of men,  
Alone unwed of those within his halls ;  
But he within an inner chamber slept,  
And there his lady wife prepared his couch.

Now when the rosy-fingered Dawn arose 500  
Forth fared from bed Nestor, Gerenia's Lord,  
And on the white and polished seats of stone,  
Glist'ning as though with the fresh sheen of oil,  
Before his lofty gates he sat him down.  
There in the days of yore had Neleus sat,  
In counsel equal to th' Immortal Gods ;  
But he had passed into the nether world,  
And now his son Nestor, Gerenia's Lord,  
The stay and hope of the Achæan folk,  
Leaning upon his staff, here took his seat, 510  
While round him gathering from their chambers came  
A goodly band of sons. Stratius was there,  
Aretus, Echephron, and Perseus too,  
And god-like Thrasymedes ; sixth and last  
Peisistratus, the youthful hero, came.  
So in their midst they placed Telemachus,  
And to them spake Nestor, Gerenia's Lord ;  
“ Haste ye, dear children, to perform my will,

That I may with Athené favour find,  
First of the blessed Gods ; for that she came 520  
In presence visible unto the feast.  
So to the pasture, let one go and bid  
The herdsman bring a heifer to be slain ;  
Another to Telemachus' dark ship,  
And all his comrades hither speed save two ;  
Another to Laercés hie, and there  
Say that the craftsman come and gild with gold  
The victim's horns ; the rest abide ye here  
And make the handmaids through these famous halls  
Set forth the feast, and place about the hearth 530  
Seats for the guests and fuel for the fire,  
And bear fresh water."

So he spake, and they  
Forthwith betook them to their tasks. Then came  
The heifer from the field, then from the ship  
Of stout Telemachus his comrades came ;  
Came too the craftsman, bearing in his hands  
The brazen tools wherewith he wrought his craft,  
Anvil and hammer and the pincers strong,  
With which the gold he fashioned ; last too came  
Unto the sacrifice Athené's self. 540  
Then Nestor gave the gold, the aged chief,  
And on the heifer's horns the craftsman shed  
The molten metal, fashioning his work,  
To find him favour in the Goddess' eyes ;



And Echephron and Stratius by the horns  
Led forth the victim ; next Aretus came,  
Out of his chamber, bearing in one hand  
An ewer all embossed with flowery forms,  
In th' other a full basket wherein was  
The sacrificial barley ; whilst hard by 550  
Stout Thrasymedes with his axe uplift  
Stood all prepared to deal the deadly blow.  
But Perseus held the dish to catch the blood,  
And Nestor, aged chief, performed the rites—  
Washing of hands and sprinkling of the grain—  
And to Athené prayed, and on the fire,  
A lock of hair cut from the victim's head  
He cast. So when the rites were duly done,  
Straightway stout Thrasymedes, Nestor's son,  
Stood by and struck the blow, and with the axe 560  
Severed the tendons of the heifer's neck,  
And loosened all her strength. But with the blow  
Rose the shrill cry of all the women there,  
Daughters and wives of sons and Nestor's wife  
Revered Eurydice, eldest of those  
Whom Clymenus called daughters ; but the men  
Lifted the heifer from the broad-wayed Earth,  
And stout Peisistratus across her throat  
Drew the sharp knife and the black blood gushed forth  
And life forsook the body. Then the beast 570  
They parted limb from limb, and from the thighs



They cut the meat and wrapped it in the fat  
And laid the raw flesh on. But the old chief  
On the cleft wood consumed the sacrifice,  
And o'er it poured the red wine, whilst the youths  
Standing beside him held the five-pronged forks.  
So when the thighs were roasted in the fire,  
And they had tasted of the inward parts,  
Into small parts they cut and on sharp spits  
They roasted all the rest.

In the meanwhile 580

Fair Polycasté, Nestor's youngest child,  
Bathed and anointed with pure olive oil  
Telemachus, and round his shoulders cast  
A cloak and tunic. Then from out the bath  
He stepped in form and figure like a God,  
And beside Nestor, shepherd of the flock,  
He took his seat.

Now when the roast was done,  
The outside meat they drew from off the spits,  
And sat them down and feasted ; and fair youths  
Attended on them and in golden cups 590  
Poured forth the wine, till they had had their fill  
Of meat and drink. Then to th' assembled guests  
Nestor, Gerenia's warrior lord, thus spake ;

“Come, children mine, and yoke the fair-maned  
steeds

Unto the chariot, that Telemachus

May on his way set forth."

He spake ; they heard,  
And swiftly yoked the coursers to the car ;  
And in it corn and wine and dainties rare,  
Such as the kings of Heaven-descended race  
Are wont to eat, the careful house-dame stored. 600

Then stepped Telemachus into the car,  
And by him Nestor's son Peisistratus,  
A captain stout of men, and grasped the reins  
And lashed the steeds. But they were nothing loth,  
And flew towards the plain, leaving behind  
Pylos' high citadel ; so all the day  
Rattled the yoke they bore upon their necks,  
And the sun set and all Earth's ways grew dark.  
But they to Pheræ came unto the house  
Of Diocles, the son of that Orsilochus, 610  
Who of Alphæus was begot, and there  
They rested and were entertained all night.

But when the rosy-fingered Dawn arose,  
They yoked the steeds and clomb into the car,  
And from the gateway and the echoing porch  
Drove forth, and with the lash Peisistratus  
Wakened the coursers' mettle. Nothing loth  
Across the plain all thick with corn they flew,  
Unto their journey's end—such speed they had.  
Then sank the sun and all Earth's ways grew dark. 620

BOOK IV,

## SUMMARY OF BOOK IV

TELEMACHUS arrives at the Court of Sparta and is hospitably received by Menelaus. Whilst they talk, Helen, accompanied by her handmaids, enters the room, and recognises Telemachus by his likeness to his father. In the course of the conversation which ensues, and which awakens the memories of past grief, Helen pours into the cups a drug to cause forgetfulness of sorrow, and they all retire to rest.

On the following day, Telemachus declares the object of his visit, and Menelaus tells him how when stayed by contrary winds in the River Ægyptus he captured Proteus, the Ancient Man of the sea, and learnt from him the fate of Aias, the murder of Agamemnon, and the present detention of Odysseus in the island of Calypso.

Meanwhile the Suitors in Ithaca question of the absence of Telemachus, and plot to waylay him on his voyage home in the strait between Ithaca and rugged Samos ; which Medon, the old attendant, overhears and reports to Penelope, and thereupon Penelope prays to Athené, who sends a phantom to comfort her, as she slumbers at the gate of dreams.

## BOOK IV

So they to hollow Lacedæmon came  
Amidst its rocky gorges. To the house  
Of noble Menelaus straight they drove,  
And him they found making a marriage feast  
Unto his kinsmen for his son and daughter ;  
For she must needs wed with Achilles' son,  
To whom by solemn covenant and vow  
She had been formerly in Troy betrothed ;  
And now the Gods had brought to pass the match.  
Her then her Sire was sending forth in state      10  
Unto the far-famed city of her Lord,  
Prince of the Myrmidons, with horse and car ;  
But to his son, born of a woman slave  
And named "the child of grief," he gave to wife  
Alector's daughter, Spartan born and bred.  
For unto Helen the Immortal Gods  
Granted no issue from the day she bare

The beautiful Hesione, as fair  
As golden Aphrodité.

Thus they held  
In that high vaulted hall blithe festival, 20  
Neighbours and kinsmen of the noble chief.  
Meantime a godlike minstrel touched his lyre  
And as he made a prelude to his song,  
Two tumblers fooled it 'midst the company.

Now as they stood before the palace gate  
Nestor's fair son and stout Telemachus,  
Them Etiôneus, servant stout and true  
Of Menelaus first espied, and he  
Bare to his lord the tidings with all speed,  
And standing near him thus his tale he told ; 30

“O Menelaus, Zeus-descended Prince,  
Two strangers stand without and much they seem  
To wear the likeness of a Heavenly race.  
Say shall we loose their steeds from out the car,  
Or send them elsewhere to some other host ?”  
To him in wrath the fair-haired Prince replied ;

“O Etiôneus, surely thou wast wont  
To be a man of counsel ; but thy words  
Are senseless as a child's. Have we not too  
Eaten the bread of hospitality 40  
Of stranger hands, nor know we yet if Zeus  
Hath made an end of all our sufferings ?  
Unharness then the steeds, and bring our guests

Unto the feast."

He spake, and to his task  
Sped Etiôneus, calling to his aid  
His ready comrades ; swift they came and loosed  
The sweating coursers, and to rack and stall  
They made them fast, and gave them spelt to eat  
Mixed with white barley. Then they set the car  
Against the shining faces of the wall, 50  
And led the guests into the royal house ;  
And much those strangers marvelled as they gazed,  
For through the lofty palace of the Prince  
There shone a light as bright as sun or moon.  
But when their eyes were satiate with the view,  
Into the smooth and polish'd baths they stepped,  
And handmaids gave attendance, and with oil  
Anointed them, and o'er their shoulders cast  
Tunic and cloak of wool ; and by the side  
Of Menelaus on the chairs of state 60  
They sat them down. Then in a golden jug  
A handmaid bare them water and poured forth  
Into a silver basin, and withal  
Beside them placed a polished board, whereon  
A house-dame grave displayed a bounteous store  
Of dainties, whilst the carver raised on high  
And placed beside them the well-furnished dish  
And the gold goblets. Then with courteous speech  
The fair-haired Prince gave welcome to his guests ;



“Eat and make merry, and when satisfied  
Ye shall declare what men ye be ; for sure  
Your lineage stands recorded in your looks,  
And ye are sprung from Heaven-descended Kings.  
A churl was never father to such sons.”

70—

He spake, and from the royal mess bestowed  
On his young guests a roasted chine of beef,  
And they stretched forth their hands unto the feast.  
Now when they had their fill of meat and drink,  
To Nestor's son Telemachus thus spoke  
With bated breath, that none might hear his speech ; 80

“Friend of my heart, see, son of Nestor, see  
Through the resounding halls the gleam of brass,  
And gold and silver, amber, ivory,  
Such and so many as light up the courts  
Of the Olympian Zeus. I gaze with awe  
O'erpowered as I behold.”

The fair-haired prince  
O'erheard him as he spoke, and thus replied ;

“Nay, children dear, 'tis not for mortal man  
To vie with Zeus. His treasure and his courts  
Are everlasting, but of other men  
There may or may not be, whose wealth with mine  
May make comparison. In the eighth year,  
After sore wanderings, I hither came,  
With store of treasure in my hollow ships,  
By Cyprus and Phœnicia, by the shores

90

Of Egypt and the Æthiopian folk,  
By the Erembi and Sidonian race,  
And by the Libyan lands, where from their birth  
The lambs are horned. Three times in the year  
The teeming ewes bring forth their young, and there 100  
Nor king nor shepherd lacketh cheese or flesh,  
Or the sweet milk, which the flocks yield at will.  
There as I wandered gathering store of wealth,  
A traitor slew my brother unawares,  
All through the guile of his accursed wife.  
Wherefore all un-rejoicing do I reign  
O'er these possessions. But perchance this tale  
Ye from your fathers, whosoe'er they be,  
Have heard, for I have suffered much and seen  
My rich and goodly mansion desolate. 110  
Would that the third part only of that wealth  
Were mine to-day and that I dwelt here still,  
And those brave men who perished in broad Troy  
Afar from Argos, nurturer of steeds,  
Were yet alive ! So in these very halls  
I sit and in the intervals of mirth—  
For soon man's heart grows weary of chill grief—  
I make my lamentation for the dead.  
But for them all I grieve not as for One,  
Whose memory drives both sleep and food away ; 120  
For none methinks of all th' Achæan chiefs  
Endured such labours, sore and perilous,

As did Odysseus, ever storing up  
Unto himself trouble and care of mind,  
And unto me a grief that never rests ;  
For that he absent is, nor know we aught  
Whether in life or death he be—meanwhile  
His sire Laertes and his steadfast wife  
And he whom erst he left a new-born child  
Make lamentation for him.”

Thus he spake, 130

And with the mention of the father's name  
He stirred the son to grief. Then fast the tears  
Fell to the ground, and o'er his eyes the youth  
With both his hands his purple mantle drew.  
Him Menelaus marked, and pondered much,  
If he should suffer him to name his sire,  
Or should make trial of him in his speech.

Now while he pondered in his mind these thoughts,  
Forth from her fragrant and high-vaulted bower,  
Like unto golden-shafted Artemis, 140  
Came Helen, and with her Adrasté came,  
And placed a stately chair ; Alcippe next  
Brought a fair coverlet of softest wool,  
And Phylo bore a silver casket, which  
Alcandré gave her, wife of Polybus ;  
Who in Egyptian Thebes had his abode,  
And from the goodly treasures of his house,  
Two silver baths to Menelaus gave.

Two tripods and ten talents of pure gold  
Likewise on Helen did his wife bestow— 150  
Fair gifts, a golden distaff, and besides  
A silver casket set on wheels, whose rim  
Was wrought in gold. This basket with its store  
Of well-spun yarn her handmaid Phylo placed  
Beside her mistress, and across it laid  
A distaff full of the dark violet wool.

Then Helen sat her down ; beneath her feet  
A stool was placed and to her lord she spake ;  
“O Heaven-descended Menelaus, say,  
Who are these men who come beneath our roof? 160  
Shall I dissemble or declare the truth?  
Nay, but my heart will have me speak, for sure  
Ne’er have I seen in man’s or woman’s face  
As in this youth, whoever he may be,  
Such wondrous likeness to Odysseus’ son—  
Him who was left an infant in his halls  
What time ye came, breathing fierce threats of war  
’Gainst Ilium, ye and the Achæan host,  
In quest of me most shameless.”

Thus she spake,  
And to her words the fair-haired Prince replied ; 170

“Lady, what thou hast guessed I too perceive.  
Such were his feet and hands, his glance of eye,  
And such his head and flowing locks ; and now,  
When of Odysseus I did mention make,

And of the toils he for my sake endured,  
I marked the tear steal down his cheek, I saw  
Him draw his purple mantle o'er his eyes."

To him the son of Nestor, young Peisistratus,  
Thus answer made ;

"O Heaven-descended Prince,

O Menelaus, e'en as thou hast said, 180

This is Odysseus' son ; but he is wise

And sober-minded, and would scorn to speak

In boastful fashion or vainglorious,

Standing before thee and by thee made glad,

As by the voice of an Immortal God.

'Tis Nestor of Gerenia sent me forth

To be his guide, for much he craved to come

To sight of thee, that thou might'st counsel him

In word or deed ; for many are the griefs

Which, when a father is afar from home, 190

A son who hath no helpers in the house,

Must needs endure. So doth it now befall

Here with Telemachus, nor hath he friends

Amongst his folk to shield him from distress."

Thus spake he, and the fair-haired Chief replied ;

"Surely this day beneath my roof hath come

The son of a dear friend, who for my sake

Endured much hardship ; and I fondly deemed

That if th' Olympian Lord, loud-thundering Zeus,

Vouchsafed him a return across the main 200

In his swift ships, I would on him bestow  
A heartier welcome than on any chief  
Of Argive blood. He should have surely dwelt  
In Argos, and methinks for love of him  
I would have made some one town desolate  
Of those that call me master ; and for him  
I would have built fair houses, and have brought  
Hither his son, his folk, and all he hath  
From Ithaca beyond the sea ; and then  
We should have held sweet converse, nor should aught 210  
Have come between us and our happiness,  
Till the dark cloud of death o'ershadowed us.  
Surely the God, who his return denied,  
Grudged us the joy of meeting."

So he spake,  
And those who heard him yearned to make lament.  
Then Heaven-descended Argive Helen wept,  
Wept Menelaus, and Telemachus,  
And Nestor's son could scarce restrain his tears ;  
For he bethought him of Antilochus,  
Whom the bright son of radiant Eos slew. 220  
And as he thought upon him he thus spake ;

"O son of Atreus, Nestor ever said  
That thou wert wise beyond all mortal men,  
When we sometime made mention of thy name  
And question asked. Then suffer me to speak,  
For early dawn draws near—I have no joy



In sorrow-stricken feast,—not that in sooth  
I grudge the tear to one of mortal kind,  
Who dies and bows to Fate ; for even so  
To shave the head and let the teardrop fall 230  
Are our sole tribute to poor suff'ring men.  
And I too mourn a brother, not the least  
Of Argive chiefs, whom thou perchance didst know,  
Though I nor met nor saw him ; but men say  
For speed of foot and prowess in the fight,  
That none might match Antilochus."

To him the fair-haired Prince made answer thus ;  
"Thy words and acts, dear youth, might well beseem  
The wise and aged ; such too was thy sire.  
Wherefore thy speech is prudent ; and methinks 240  
Easy it is to recognise the race  
Of him, for whom the son of Cronos weaves  
The web of happiness, whether at birth  
Or in the wedding-hour,—even as now  
He hath vouchsafed to Nestor's ripe old age,  
In his own halls, there to behold his sons  
Grow wise in counsel and renowned in fight.  
So let there be an end of this our grief,  
And take we thought touching our solemn feast,  
And, as is due, pour water on our hands. 250  
To-morrow morn Telemachus and I  
Will to each other many a tale recount."

He spake, and Menelaus' servant true



Asphelion, poured the water on their hands,  
And they betook them to the rich repast.  
But heavenly Helen on far other thoughts  
Intent, now cast into the wine they drank  
A mighty drug of such rare potency,  
That it could make all pain and sorrow cease,  
And shed oblivion upon human ills. 260

On the same day who so should drain that cup  
Would shed no tear though sire or mother died,  
Or though his brother or his well-loved son  
Fell in his sight pierced by the foeman's steel.  
Such cunning and such precious medicines  
Had Helen, Child of Zeus, which she received  
From Polydamna, Thon's Egyptian wife.  
Rich is that seed-plot there, bearing all kinds,  
Whether for good or ill ; for every man  
Is of Paiaëon's race, in leech-craft skilled 270  
Beyond all other men. So when the Queen  
Had cast that potent drug into the wine  
She bade them pour it forth, and thus she spake ;

“O Son of Atreus, Heaven-descended Prince,  
And you, ye sons of noble chieftains here,  
Now, for as much as Zeus the lord of all,  
Giveth to each man as he deemeth meet,  
Of joy or woe—come, sit ye down and feast ;  
And whilst ye converse hold, I will rehearse  
A tale to match this lordly festival, 280

A fitting tale for this high company.  
Not that I purpose to recount the deeds,  
Which stout Odysseus did, save this alone—  
The gallant feat of arms he dared to do  
On Trojan ground, where ye Achæan chiefs  
So sorely suffered. Once upon a time  
Scoring himself with wounds dishonourable,  
And with some paltry rags about him cast,  
In semblance of a slave, like beggar-man,  
He who might brook no rival in the fleet, 290  
Passed through the broad-wayed city of his foes.  
They knew him not. Alone I knew the man  
And questioned him. But he with cunning shifts  
Baffled my purpose, till at last, when I  
Washed and anointed him with olive oil  
And o'er him cast his robe and swore an oath,  
A mighty oath, that I would not betray  
Odysseus to the Trojans until he  
Had won his way back to the tents and ships—  
Then and then only he revealed to me 300  
His people's counsel. So he turned and smote  
With his long sword full many of his foes,  
And laden with intelligence he fared  
Back to the Argive host. The Trojan dames  
Made lamentation loud, but I rejoiced ;  
For even now my heart was turned tow'rds home,  
And I had learnt to rue the lunacy

Whereby me Aphrodite had beguiled  
Away from home, and child, and bridal bed,  
And my dear Lord, in whom nor wit nor grace 310  
Were ever wanting.”

Straight to her replied  
The fair-haired Prince ;

“ Well, Lady, hast thou said ;  
Long have I known the counsel of great chiefs,  
And many a country have I wandered o’er,  
But never have I with my eyes beheld  
Such as Odysseus for stout-heartedness ;  
Nor know I such another deed of arms  
As he dared do, when in the hollow horse  
Ambushed we lay, the noblest of the host,  
To bring on Ilium her appointed doom. 320  
Then thou too camest thither and with thee  
Godlike Deiphobus ; and sure some God  
To Troy propitious, must have swayed thy will.  
Thrice round the hollow ambush thou didst pace,  
And handling it didst call each chief by name,  
Making thy voice to counterfeit the sound  
Of each man’s absent wife. That day thy call  
I and Tydeides and Odysseus heard,  
As in the midst we sat ; and sore we twain  
Craved to rush forth or to make answer there, 330  
But that Odysseus our rash purpose stayed.  
So all sat silent of our other chiefs

Save Anticlus who sought to make reply.  
Alone he strove to speak ; but on his mouth  
Odysseus held his hand, nor loosed his grasp  
Until Athené led thee far away.  
Thus he from ruin saved us."

So he spake,  
And wise Telemachus to him replied ;

"O Menelaus, Heaven-descended Prince,  
'Tis all the harder lot. Not even so 340  
Could His stout heart of adamant avail  
To save him. Now dismiss us to our rest,  
That we may take our joy in gentle sleep."

He spake, and Argive Helen bade her maids  
To spread the beds within the porch and lay  
On them the rich and purple coverlets,  
And place the arras and thick woollen cloaks  
To be a covering over all. So they  
Sped through the palace torch in hand, and spread  
The beds ; and forth the herald led the guests. 350  
There in the outer porch Telemachus  
And Nestor's noble son took their repose ;  
But in an inner chamber of the house  
The son of Atreus slept, and by his side,  
Fairest of women, long-robed Helen lay.

But when the rosy-fingered Dawn arose,  
Forth from his couch stout Menelaus sprang ;  
He donned his robes and o'er his shoulders cast

His trenchant sword-blade, and beneath his feet  
He bound his sandals bright ; and like a God 360  
He from his chamber strode, and sat him down  
Beside Telemachus and to him spake ;

“What cause, Telemachus, hath brought thee here  
Over the sea’s broad depths to the fair land  
Of Lacedæmon ? Tell me truly then  
Is it for public weal or private gain ?”

To him the wise Telemachus replied ;  
“O Menelaus, Heaven-descended Prince,  
I hither come to learn from thee some news  
Of my lost father ; for my house and lands 370  
Are spoiled and wasted, and unfriendly men  
Throng in my palace, slay my sheep and kine,  
And in their insolence my mother woo.  
Wherefore I here beseech thee of thy grace,  
Tell me the piteous story of his death,  
Whether with thine own eyes thou saw’st him fall,  
Or from some wanderer didst hear the tale ;  
For sure to great misfortune he was born.  
And speak not to me in soft pitying speech,  
But tell me how thou didst behold his face ; 380  
For I beseech thee—if in word or deed  
My sire, the good Odysseus, ever made  
And kept his plighted troth on Trojan soil,  
Where ye Achæans suffered so much woe—  
I pray thee think on this, and tell me truth.”

Then in great wrath the fair-haired Prince replied ;

“ Woe for the cravens who presume to take  
Rest in the brave man’s bed ; as when some hind  
Hath laid her tender young ones in the lair  
Of a strong lion, and hath gone in quest 390  
Of pasture in the grassy mountain vales ;  
But he hath got him back into his den,  
And on that pair hath wrought a bloody deed :—  
Such vengeance shall Odysseus wreak on them.  
Would to Athené, would to Father Zeus,  
Would to Apollo, that as once he was—  
When on a time by well-built Lesbos’ wall  
With rude Philomeleides he prevailed  
In wrestling match, and threw him heavily,  
Whereat th’ Achæan host rejoiced—would now 400  
That he were such, and in his might would come  
To keep the Suitors company ! Methinks  
Swift doom and bitter wedlock should be theirs.  
But what thou seek’st to know that will I tell  
Without deceit or subterfuge ; e’en such,  
As He, the Ancient One of Ocean said,  
Who cannot lie, such I will tell to thee.

Though much I craved once more to be at home,  
The Gods detained me in Ægyptus’ river ;  
For unaccomplished were my offerings, 410  
And ill it liketh them that men should be  
Heedless of their commandments. There, off shore



In the full wash of ocean lies an isle,  
Pharos y'clept, in distance from the land  
Such as a ship may compass in a day,  
When blows abaft the breeze. In that isle lies  
A sheltered haven, whence the well-trimmed barks  
May launch into the deep, when once their crews  
Have ta'en on board fresh water. Twenty days  
The Gods detained me there ; nor blew the winds 420  
To waft our gallant ships across the deep.  
And surely then our sustenance and strength  
Were well-nigh spent, but that Eidothea,  
Daughter of Him, the Ancient of the Sea,  
The mighty Proteus, with compassion moved,  
Pitied and saved me, wandering all alone  
Apart from my companions, who the while  
Roamed over the island striving with bent hooks  
To catch them food and stay their famine pangs.  
So she beside me stood and thus she spake ; 430

‘Art thou so senseless and so dull of mind,  
Or wayward art, and tak'st delight in pain,  
So long thou lingerest, stranger, in this isle  
Nor hast the heart to go ; while wasteth fast  
The courage of thy comrades?’

So she spake,

And I made answer ;

‘Surely I will speak,  
Whoe'er thou art among the Goddesses.



Against my will I tarry here. Needs must  
That I have sinned against th' Immortal Gods.  
Then tell me true—for Heavenly Beings know— 440  
What God hath bound and stayed me in my course,  
And teach me how across the teeming deep  
I may re-seek my home.'

I spake and straight  
The Goddess answered ;

' I will tell thee all.  
'Tis here Ægyptian Proteus hath his haunts,  
The Ancient One of Ocean, he who knows  
All the sea's depths, Poseidon's underling,  
Himself immortal, one who cannot lie ;  
And he, 'tis said, my father is. Wherefore  
Lie thou in wait, and seize him if thou canst, 450  
That he the measure of thy homeward way  
Across the teeming deep may make thee know.  
Yes, he can tell thee, Heaven-descended Prince,  
Whate'er of good or ill hath thee befall'n  
In thine own house since thou didst fare abroad  
Upon thy perilous and painful path.'

She spake, and I made answer ;  
' Yet once more  
Counsel me how to snare this godlike sage,  
Lest seeing or presaging my approach  
He should escape me ; for most hard it is 460  
For mortal man to subjugate a God.'

I spake, and straight the Goddess fair replied ;

‘ Yes ; I will tell thee, stranger, all the truth.

What time the sun hath clomb to midmost Heaven,

Then from the sea, before the west wind’s breath

And in its darkling ripple clothed will come

That Ancient One of Ocean who lies not,

And in the hollow caves will take his rest,

While round him sleep in close array the seals—

Strange brood of the fair daughter of the main, 470

Creeping from out the sea and breathing forth

A bitter odour of the briny depths.

Thither I’ll lead thee at the break of dawn,

And duly place each man in ambuscade.

Therefore go choose from out thy company

Three of the trustiest, and I’ll lay bare

What wiles within his ken that old man hath.

First, thou shalt see him number all his flock ;

Next, when the tale is told he shall lie down

Among his seals, like shepherd ’midst his sheep ; 480

But when thou see’st him fully lulled to rest,

Bethink thee of thy might and hold him fast,

Though sore he strive and struggle to be free.

For he shall make essay of all his arts,

Taking the form of every creeping thing,

That moveth on the Earth or fire or flood ;

Yet grasp him all the more, and hold him fast

Until he question thee and reassumes

The form he had when first he fell asleep.  
Then, hero, hold thy hand and set him free, 490  
And ask of him what God is wroth with thee,  
And how thou may'st return across the main.'

She spake, and dived beneath the swelling tide,  
And I betook me to my ships that stood  
On the sea-sand ; and, as I went, my heart  
Was troubled in me. But when I had come  
Unto the shore and supper now was done,  
Night fell, and on the beach we took our rest.

When rosy Eos brightened in the sky,  
Beside the broad-wayed ocean I went forth, 500  
And made my supplication to the Gods,  
And chose me three companions good at need.

Meanwhile the Nymph had gone below the tide  
And come again, bearing with her four skins  
Stripped freshly from the seal, for in her mind  
There was the purpose to ensnare her sire.  
So in the sand she scooped a hiding-place,  
And couched her down, and we to her drew near,  
While she disposed us in our ambushade,  
And cast o'er each a sealskin. Grievous was 510  
Our watch that day, for that the noisome smell  
Of the sea-calves was hard to bear—for who,  
Who would elect to lie down with a seal ?  
But soon the Nymph relieved our sad annoy ;  
Beneath our nostrils she ambrosia placed,

And its sweet fragrance killed the salt sea reek.  
So all the morning we with steadfast mind  
Maintained our watch, till, from the briny deep  
In flocks the sea-calves trooped, and on the beach  
Couched them in rows ; then last from out the sea 520  
Came at the hour of noon the Ancient One,  
Counted his fatted seals, and told their tale ;  
And we were numbered in, nor did he dream  
Of the deceit, but laid him down to rest.  
But with a shout we rushed on the old man,  
And seized him. He, not heedless of his art,  
Into a bearded lion turned himself,  
Then to a snake, a pard, a mighty boar,  
And rushing flood and lofty flowering tree ;  
But with unwavering mind we held him fast, 530  
Till the old man, aweary of his wiles,  
Gave o'er, and thus he questioned me and said ;  
    'Say, son of Atreus, who hath counselled thee,  
Who of the Gods to take me unawares ?  
And what thy will ?'

                                He spake, and I replied ;  
'Why dost thou speak with these deceiving words ?  
Full well thou knowest I am holden here,  
Nor may I find escape ; but my sad heart  
Within me fails ; so tell me—for all things  
Are to th' Immortals known—tell me, old man, 540  
What God hath bound and stayed me in my course,

And how I may return across the seas?’

I spake, and he made answer ;

‘Thou didst err

In that thou did’st not pay thy vows to Zeus

And to the Gods, what time thou went’st aboard ;

So mightest thou have quickly won thy home

Across the dark blue sea ; but know thou this

That it is fated thou shalt never see

Thy friends, thy well-built home, thy native land,

Till to Ægyptus’ cloud-fed stream thou com’st 550

And offerest up the sacred hecatombs

Unto the Gods, the rulers of wide Heaven.

They shall make plain the path thou seek’st to know.’

Then at his words my heart was broke in twain,

For that he bade me o’er the misty deep

Re-seek Ægyptus, a long weary way.

Yet did I answer make ;

‘All this, old man,

I will perform according to thy word ;

But tell me this thing more, and tell me true,

Did all th’ Achæan host make safe return, 560

Whom I and Nestor left on Trojan ground ;

Or perished any by a shameful fate

On board his ship or in the arms of friends,

Having wound up the tangled skein of war?’

So spake I, and straightway he made reply ;

‘Why, son of Atreus, dost thou question me ?

It is not meet for thee to know my mind,  
Nor wilt thou tearless be when thou hast heard  
All that I have to tell. Many there were  
Who perished ; many, too, who there were left. 570  
Only two chieftains of your mail-clad host  
Died on the way—thou in the fight thyself  
Wast present—in mid-ocean dwells a third,  
A captive. 'Twas on board his long-oared ships  
That Aias met his fate ; for at the first  
Poseidon suffered him to near the rocks  
Of Gyræ, and had saved him from the wave.  
And surely then he would have 'scaped his doom,  
Although Athené's curse was on him laid,  
But that distraught he spake a haughty word, 580  
And boasted that he had, despite the Gods,  
Escaped the ocean depths. Poseidon heard,  
And with his trident in his mighty grasp  
Rent the Gyræan cliff in fragments twain.  
One half stood rooted to its place ; one half,  
Whereon in his distraction Aias sat,  
Toppled into the sea and bore him down  
Into the swelling flood, and so he died,  
And drank of the salt flood.

But speak we next  
Touching thy brother. He on board his ships 590  
Had 'scaped his fate, for Heré, mighty Queen,  
Had granted him deliverance. He had come



Unto Malea's headland when the gale  
Caught him and bore him o'er the teeming deep,  
Sorely lamenting, to the furthest bounds  
Of the dominion where in times of old  
Thyestes dwelt, and now Thyestes' son,  
Ægisthus, ruled. There on him shone the hope  
Of safe return to home, for the great Gods  
Turned to a favouring breeze the adverse gale. 600  
And to his home he came ; and joyfully  
Did Agamemnon step upon the strand,  
And lay hold with his hands and kiss the ground  
With many a burning tear, as he beheld  
His native land. Him from his watch-tower spied  
The watchman whom Ægisthus set to watch,  
And bribed him with two golden talents. He  
For the full space of twelve months kept his watch,  
Lest Agamemnon unperceived should pass,  
And burst upon them with a storm of war. 610  
So to the house he sped and bare the news  
Unto Ægisthus, ruler of the folk,  
Who thereupon a treacherous plot devised.  
On one side of the hall a score of men,  
The choicest that he had, in ambuscade  
He hid, on th' other made them spread the feast ;  
And then with horse and chariot forth he passed,  
And to the banquet Agamemnon bade,  
The shepherd of his people, all the while



Within him pondering a foul deed of blood. 620  
Unconscious of his fate he led him home,  
And when the feast was o'er he slaughtered him,  
Like ox slain in the stall—nor was there one  
Of those who followed Agamemnon there,  
Nor of Ægisthus' company, who 'scaped.  
All perished in those halls.'

The old man said,

And my sad heart within me seemed to break  
As on the sand I sat me down and wept,  
Nor cared to live and look upon the sun.  
Yet when at last I made an end of tears 630  
And grovelling in the dust, then to me spake  
That old man of the sea, who cannot lie ;

    'Nay, weep not, son of Atreus, without stint,  
For this can naught avail ; bethink thee now  
How thou can'st quickly win thy native land ;  
For thou may'st yet Ægisthus find alive,  
If it so be Orestes has not been  
Beforehand with thee, and the murderer slain.  
Yet even so thou may'st his funeral grace.'

He spake, and, in despite of my sore grief 640  
My soul took comfort, and I made reply ;

    'All these I know ; now name to me the third  
Who lives and dwells a captive in mid-sea,  
If peradventure he be still alive.  
Of him, albeit much grieving, I would hear.'

Such were my words, but he forthwith replied ;  
    ‘ It is Laertes’ son, who had his home  
In Ithaca ; him have I sometime seen  
Shed bitter tears within Calypso’s halls,  
For that she holds him captive in her isle ;                   650  
Nor may he come unto his native land,  
For he hath neither well-oared ships nor crew  
To speed him o’er the broad back of the sea.  
But ’tis not fated, Heaven-descended Prince,  
That thou in Argos, famous nurse of steeds,  
Shouldst meet thy doom. Thee the great Gods shall  
    send

To the Elysian plain, Earth’s utmost bound,  
Where bright-haired Rhadamanthus dwells, where life  
To mortal man is softest, where nor snow  
Nor rain nor tempest beats, where Ocean stream           660  
Sendeth the breeze of the shrill-breathing West  
To give refreshment to the sons of men ;  
For that thou hast had Helen to thy wife,  
And art akin to Zeus.’

    The old man spake,  
And sank beneath the swelling tide ; but I  
With my stout comrades to the ships repaired,  
And as I went I pondered on his words.  
Now when we came there and our meal was done,  
Night fell, and on the beach we took our rest.

    But when the rosy-fingered Dawn arose,                   670

Down to the boundless sea we drew our barks,  
And in them placed the masts and sails, and we  
Sitting in order due smote with our oars  
Upon the hoary main. So once again  
Unto Ægyptus' cloud-fed stream we came,  
And moored our ships and offered sacrifice.  
But when the wrath of the Immortal Gods  
Was thus appeased, a lofty mound I reared  
To Agamemnon's never-dying fame.  
And now my task was done ; I homewards turned, 680  
Th' Immortal Gods vouchsafed a favouring breeze,  
And to my land restored me. Wherefore now  
Tarry awhile, my guest, within these halls,  
Till the eleventh or the twelfth day come.  
Then will I send thee home with precious gifts—  
Three steeds, a burnished car, a goodly cup,  
Wherein thou may'st in memory of me  
Make all thy days libations to the Gods."

To him the sage Telemachus replied ;  
"Nay, son of Atreus, stay me not for long. 690  
Fain would I sit beside thee for a year  
And list in pleasure to thy words and tales,  
Nor think of home and parents ; but that now  
My comrades wait impatiently for me  
In sacred Pylos ; and methinks too long  
I tarry here. So let thy gift to me  
Be somewhat I may treasure to all time.

I cannot take thy steeds to Ithaca—  
Nay, keep them as the glory of thy house ;  
For thou art lord of a wide-spreading plain, 700  
Wherein the lotus and the marsh-grass grow,  
And wheat and barley. Rock-bound Ithaca  
Hath no wide race-course or rich pasture-lands ;  
'Tis fit for the wild goat, yet in my eyes  
Tis far more lovely than a land of steeds.  
Our islands suit not horses, nor have they  
Broad meadows—least of all hath Ithaca.”

He spake ; the warrior Prince smiled at his words,  
And on him gently laid his hand, and said ;

“Thy words, my son, are noble as thy birth, 710  
And I will change my purpose. Of those gifts,  
Which in my treasury are stored, will I  
Give thee whate'er is fairest and most rare—  
A bowl of solid silver wrought by hand,  
The lips of which are overlaid with gold.  
It was Hephæstus' work bestowed on me  
By Phædimus, Sidonian prince, what time  
He entertained me on my homeward way.  
This will I give thee.”

So the two discoursed,  
And to the palace of the God-like King 720  
The banqueters came crowding ; some brought sheep,  
And some brought glorious wine, and bread was sent  
By their fair-tiréd wives. Thus in the hall

They made them busy with the banqueting.

Meanwhile before Odysseus' house there stood  
Upon a level spot, where they were wont  
To flaunt their insolence, the Suitors' crowd,  
And tossed in sport the quoit and hurled the spear.  
Antinous and stout Eurymachus,  
Their leaders and their choicest men of worth, 730  
Sat there. To them Noemon, Phronius' son,  
Drew near, and thus Antinous addressed ;

“ Know we, Antinous, or know we not  
When comes Telemachus from sandy Pylos ?  
For thither hath he gone with ship of mine,  
And I have need of it to cross the sea  
To Elis, land of the wide-circling dance ;  
For I have there twelve mares and sturdy mules  
Unbroken to the yoke, and one of these  
I fain would teach to draw.”

But at his speech 740  
Amazement filled their minds ; they had not thought  
Of Pylos, but they deemed the royal youth  
Was in the fields at home among the sheep,  
Or with the swineherd. Then Antinous  
Eupeithes' son made answer ;

“ Tell me sooth,  
When went he, and who bare him company ?  
Were they the youth and flower of Ithaca,  
Or hired servants and his serfs ? for this

Was all within his power—tell me truth.  
And did he take thy ship in thy despite, 750  
Or didst thou grant it him at his request ?”

To him Noemon, Phronius’ son, replied ;  
“ Myself I gave it ; what else could I do  
Where such a one as he, burthened with grief,  
Doth make petition ? Yea, ’twere hard, methinks,  
To give him a denial. And the youths  
Who sailed with him stand even next to us  
In place and birth. Amongst them I remarked  
Their leader Mentor, unless ’twere a God—  
For all the semblance of a God he had— 760  
And now I do remember that I saw  
This self-same Mentor only yesterday,  
About the break of morn ; and yet he sailed  
To Pylos with the rest. ’Tis passing strange.”

So saying, he his father’s house re-sought ;  
But the two chiefs were angered in their mind,  
And bade the Suitors straightway cease their sports,  
And sit them down together. Then in wrath  
Eupeithes’ son, Antinous, began,  
For his dark soul was filled with scorn and rage, 770  
And his eyes burnt like fire ;

“ Surely,” he said,

“ A high and haughty act this journey is,  
Such as we deemed not that Telemachus  
Could ever compass ; and in our despite



The lad hath gone his way and ta'en the ship,  
And with him all the noblest of the folk,  
And he will be our curse. I pray that Zeus  
May blast his strength ere he a man shall grow.  
Come give me then a ship and score of men,  
And I will go and lie in wait for him 780  
'Twixt Ithaca and rocky Samos' isle,  
That he may learn to navigate the seas  
In search of his lost father."

Thus he spake ;  
All gave consent and bade him do the deed,  
And rising up went to Odysseus' house.

Not long it was before Penelope  
Learnt the dark counsels which the Suitors planned ;  
For as he chanced to stand without the court  
The herald Medon heard their secret speech,  
And the foul web of treachery they wove ; 790  
And to his lady he the tidings bore.  
To him as he upon the threshold stood  
Penelope thus spake ;

"Say, herald, why,  
Why have these lordly Suitors sent thee here ?  
Is it to bid Odysseus' handmaids cease  
From their accustomed tasks, and spread the feast  
For them ? O would that they would make an end  
Of their vain suings and assemblages,  
And eat their last and latest banquet here !



Out on ye idle men, who gather here 800  
And waste the substance of Telemachus !  
What, did ye never hear, when ye were young,  
Your fathers tell what man Odysseus was,  
Doing no wrong by evil deed or speech,  
As is the wont of kings—capricious they  
In hatred and in love—but he was hard  
To no man. What ye are, and what your deeds  
Is manifest ; nor have ye memory  
For ancient kindnesses by others done.”

She spake ; to her sage Medon made reply ; 810  
“Nay, would, my Queen, that this were all our grief.  
A deadlier evil—which may Zeus forbend—  
The Suitors are devising ; for they scheme  
To slay Telemachus as he returns  
From Pylos and from Lacedæmon fair,  
Whither he went for tidings of his sire.”

He said, and at his words her strength of heart  
Gave way, and for awhile her voice was mute ;  
Brimmed o’er her eyes with tears, silent her speech,  
Till at the last she spake and answer made ; 820

“O herald, wherefore went my child away ?  
What need for him to sail in the fleet ships  
Which are the coursers of the briny deep,  
Wherewith men cross the flood ? Was it, forsooth,  
That his fair name should perish among men ?”

She spake ; to her sage Medon made reply ;

“I cannot say whether it was a God  
Or his own mind, that moved him to set forth  
To Pylos for some tidings of his sire,  
Whether of his return or of his death.” 830

He said, and through Odysseus' house he passed ;  
But she was wrapped in soul-devouring grief,  
Nor could she bear to sit on chair of state,  
Though there were many in those palace halls ;  
But on the threshold of her stately bower  
She sat her down and made her piteous moan,  
And round her all her handmaids, young and old,  
Wailed lowly ; at the last Penelope  
Thus in her sorrow spake ;

“Give ear, my friends,  
For of all women who were born and bred 840  
In this my generation, upon none  
Hath the Olympian laid such load of grief  
As upon me ; whose lion-hearted spouse,  
With all the virtues of the Danaan race  
Adorned, and famous in the land of Greece  
And in mid Argos, is for ever lost.  
And now the winds have torn away my child  
Ere he had time to win himself renown,  
From out these halls—nor knew I that he went !  
Ah, faithless maidens, who had never thought 850  
To call me from my bed, though well ye knew  
His purpose when he went aboard his ship ;

For had I known his counsel, this be sure,  
He had remained though craving to be gone,  
Or he had left me dead within these halls.  
Then bid my slave, the aged Dolius, come,  
Whom my sire gave me ere I saw these isles,  
Who tends my wooded garden—bid him come  
And to Laertes swiftly bear the news,  
If it so be that he may weave some web 860  
Of crafty counsel, and may make his plaint  
Unto the people 'gainst the plotting band  
Who seek the ruin of Odysseus' House."

She spake, and Euryclea, her dear nurse,  
Made answer thus ;

“ Dear lady, slay me here  
Or spare me as thou wilt ; in nought will I  
Conceal the truth from thee—I knew it all,  
And gave him all he bade me, bread and wine ;  
And swore at his behest a mighty oath  
To keep it secret till the twelfth day came, 870  
Or till thyself shouldst learn that he was gone,  
Lest thou shouldst mar thy beauty with wild grief.  
But come now, wash thyself, fresh raiment take,  
And in thine upper chamber, with thy maids,  
Pray to Athené, daughter of great Zeus,  
For she can save him, if she will, from death ;  
And weary not an old man who hath load  
Of sorrows all his own ; for I believe

That the blest Gods still hold in love the race  
Of old Arceisius' line, and from that stem 880  
A hero yet shall come, who shall possess  
These lofty mansions and rich distant fields."

She spake, and with her words she stilled the grief  
That found its way adown her mistress' cheeks.

The lady bathed herself, fresh raiment took,  
Went to her upper chamber with her maids,  
And having laid the sacrificial meat  
Within a basket, to Athené prayed ;

" Daughter of Zeus, the ægis-bearing Lord,  
Athené, all unwearied, hear my cry ; 890  
If ever wise Odysseus in these halls  
Burnt in thine honour thighs of ox or sheep,  
Now bear the act in mind and save my son,  
And drive away these Suitors arrogant."

So cried she, and the Goddess heard her prayer.  
Meanwhile throughout those shadowy halls the band  
Of Suitors clamoured loud ; and some proud youth  
Would to his fellow say ;

" Methinks this Queen,  
This much-wooed Queen, who of her marriage dreams,  
Knows not that death lies waiting for her son." 900

Such wastheir speech, nor knew they what was doomed.  
Then spake Antinous ;

" Beware, fair sirs,  
Of boastful talk, lest some one overhear

And tell the tale within. Arise we then  
And do the deed of which we spake erewhile,  
In silence compassing our wished-for end."

He said, and chose him twenty men-at-arms,  
The stoutest that he might—and to the shore  
They took their way, and first the bark they drew  
Into deep water ; mast and sails they laid 910  
Each in their place, and to the leathern thongs  
The oars they fitted, the white canvas spread.  
Then, whilst their servants bare for them their arms,  
Far in the roadstead they the galley moored,  
Embarked themselves, partook the evening meal,  
And waited for the dusk.

Meanwhile the Queen  
In her high chamber lay, nor food nor drink  
Had passed her lips ; but much and long she mused,  
Whether her blameless son should 'scape the death,  
Or by the haughty Suitors should be slain. 920  
And as a lion, when the hunter's toils  
Around him close, fearfully meditates,  
So as she pondered, slumber sweet prevailed,  
And every joint was loosened, and she slept.

Meanwhile on other thoughts Athené bent,  
Wrought a fair phantom in a woman's shape,  
Like to Ipthimé, great Icarius' child,  
She whom Eumelus, who in Pheræ dwelt,  
Had ta'en to wife ; and to Odysseus' halls

She sent the vision, that Penelope 930  
Might cease from grieving. So beside the bed,  
Where the thong closed the door, the phantom stood  
Above the lady's head, and thus it spake ;

“Dost sleep, Penelope, woe-laden Queen ?  
The happy Gods forbid thee to be sad.  
Favoured of Heaven thy son shall yet return.”

The phantom spake, and sage Penelope,  
Soft sleeping at the gate of dreams, replied ;

“Why, Sister, art thou here, in times afore 940  
Most rarely seen and dwelling far away ?

Dost bid me cease from griefs that vex my soul—

Me that have lost my lion-hearted spouse,  
Amongst the Danaans for his prowess famed  
From Hellas to mid Argos—me whose son,  
My well-loved child, hath gone across the seas  
In hardship and in counsel all untried.

For him I grieve e'en more than for his sire,

And much I fear lest evil him befall

Among the strangers where he sojourneth,

Or on the sea ; for many are the foes 950

Who seek his life by stratagem and craft,

Ere he can win again his native land.”

She spake, and thus the shadowy form replied ;

“Be of good heart and have no fear, for know

That such a guide and guardian, as all men

Would fain have with them, doth him company,



Pallas Athené. She hath power to save,  
And she of her great pity sendeth me  
To tell thee of her purpose."

So she spake,

And thus the sage Penelope replied ; 960

"Nay, if thou art a God, or if in sooth  
Thou hast had speech with an Immortal God,  
Then tell me tidings of that hapless one.  
Lives he and looks he on the light of day,  
Or dwells he in the halls of death?"

She said,

And the dim phantom to her answer made ;

"I may not tell thee the unbroken tale  
Whether he be in life or death ; 'tis ill  
To speak of things that are all profitless."

The phantom spake, and by the door-latch passed 970  
Into thin air, and from her sleep upsprang  
The daughter of Icarius ; and her heart  
Rejoiced within her, for the dream was clear  
Which in the night had passed before her sight.

Meanwhile the Suitors sailed the watery ways,  
Plotting destruction for Telemachus.

Now in mid sea there is a rocky isle,  
Half-way 'twixt Ithaca and craggy Samos,  
A little isle named Asteris, wherein  
Lieth a double harbour good for ships. 980  
There the Achæan ambush lay in wait.



BOOK V

## SUMMARY OF BOOK V

THE Gods take counsel as to Odysseus, and Zeus sends Hermes to command Calypso to release him.

Hermes lands on Calypso's island, and finds the Nymph in her fragrant cave by a cedar fire, weaving with a golden shuttle. He conveys to her the heavenly command, to which she sorrowfully submits, and informs Odysseus, whom she finds grieving alone on the sea-shore for love of his distant home.

For four days Odysseus labours on the building of a raft, and on the fifth he sets sail, ever keeping the star Orion on his left hand.

On the 18th day, when the shadowy hills of Phæacia are in sight, Poseidon spies him from the mountains of the Solymi, and raises a storm which breaks up the raft.

In his extremity the sea-nymph Ino rises from the deep and gives him a charmed veil which bears him safely through the waves. After swimming for two days and two nights he comes to land at the mouth of a river, and, wasted and weary, falls asleep on a heap of dry leaves.

## BOOK V

THEN Eos from Tithonus' couch upsprang  
To bear the light of day to Gods and men.  
But They, th' Immortals, in high council met,  
And in their midst sat Zeus, th' almighty Lord,  
Who thunders from on high. Forthwith to them  
Athené spake and the long tale rehearsed  
Of wise Odysseus' sufferings ; for in sooth  
It grieved her sore that he a captive was  
Within the bowers of the island Nymph.

“O father Zeus, and all ye blessed Gods,      10  
Never again let sceptred monarchs rule  
With ruth and mildness ; never let them judge  
Just judgment, but be harsh and pitiless  
Their sway, if now Odysseus wise and good,  
Who ruled his people with a father's love,  
Be thus forgotten. On a far-off isle  
Within her halls the Nymph Calypso holds

The Hero captive, sorrowing sore in heart.  
He to his native land may not return ;  
On him no galleys nor true comrades wait, 20  
To bear him o'er the broad depths of the main ;  
And now his son, wending his homeward way—  
For he to sacred Lacedæmon went  
And Pylos, in the quest of his lost sire—  
His well-loved son they purpose to destroy.”

To her the cloud-compelling God replied ;  
“What words, my daughter, have escaped thy lips ?  
Didst thou not plan this shrewd device for him,  
That on his foes he should avenge himself ?  
Then in thy wisdom let Telemachus 30  
Re-seek his home, and the false Suitors too  
On board their ships return to whence they came.”

So spake he, and to Hermes his dear son  
Straightway he gave command. “Hermes,” he said,  
“For thou art ever wont to do my will,  
Say to the fair-haired Nymph, ’tis my decree  
That the long-suffering Hero should return  
Unto his home ; yet shall no God nor man  
Guide him, but on a stout and close-bound raft  
Through toil and trouble on the twentieth day 40  
To fertile Scheria he shall surely come.  
There the Phæacians dwell, a godlike race,  
And with the honours of a God shall they  
Send him to his sweet home across the sea,

Laden with brass and gold and raiment rare ;  
Such and so manifold as neither Troy,  
Nor Troy's rich booty portioned out by lot,  
Nor favouring fortune could have given him.  
For 'tis decreed that he his friends shall see,  
His lofty mansion and his native land."

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He spake, and swift obedient to his word,  
His envoy, he who erst had Argos slain,  
Bound on his feet the sandals which, like wind,  
Golden, divine, up-bore him in his flight  
O'er the salt sea and the unmeasured land ;  
And took his rod—that wondrous rod—wherewith  
He soothes the wakeful eyes, or, as he lists,  
Wakes from their slumbers the poor sons of men.  
So rod in hand the mighty envoy flew,  
Above Pieria passed, then headlong rushed  
From upper air into the sounding main.  
And like some sea-gull riding at his will  
On the deep bosom of the barren sea  
In quest of food, and in the briny flood  
Bathing his pinions, so did Hermes float  
Upon the billows, till the far-off isle  
Rose on his view. There from the purple sea  
The God stepped forth, nor paused until he stood  
Hard by the entrance of the mighty cave,  
Where dwelt the fair-haired Nymph. Within she sat ;  
On the broad hearth the goodly flame burnt bright,

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And through the isle was wafted far and wide  
The scent of frankincense and cedar log.  
Within she sat ; and bending o'er the loom  
Wrought with her golden shuttle on the web,  
And ever as she wrought sang with clear voice.  
Around that grotto grew a goodly grove,  
Alder and poplar and the cypress sweet ;  
And there the deep-winged sea-birds found their haunt,  
And owls and hawks and long-tongued cormorants, 80  
Who joy to live upon the briny flood.  
And o'er the face of that deep cave a vine  
Wove its wild tangles and its clustering grapes.  
Four fountains too, each from the other turned,  
Poured their white waters, whilst the grassy meads  
Bloomed with the parsley and the violet's flower.  
It was a sight in sooth at which a God  
Might wonder and rejoice ; and Hermes stood,  
And marvelled with delight ; but when his mind  
Was sated with the sight, he straightway came 90  
Unto the grotto. Him Calypso knew,  
Immortal Goddess—for th' Immortal Gods,  
Though far apart they dwell, are ever known  
Each to the other. Not within the cave  
Was the stout-hearted Chief, but grieving sore  
On the sea-beach he sat, as he was wont ;  
And ever gazing on the barren sea  
He vexed his soul with tears and bitter moans.



Then on a shining and a glorious seat  
Calypso placed the messenger divine, 100  
And him addressed ;

“ Lord of the golden wand,  
Wherefore art come ? Welcome thou art ; and yet  
Long hast thou been a stranger to these halls.  
Speak, and thy pleasure I will do, whate’er  
I may perform and Destiny doth will.  
But enter first and taste thy hostess’ cheer.”

She spake, and swift before her guest she spread  
Th’ ambrosial food and the red nectar juice.  
And Hermes ate and drank, and when his soul  
Was satisfied, to her he answer made ; 110

“ As God to God thou askest why I come.  
Hear then the truth—’tis by command of Zeus  
Unwilling I am here—for willingly  
Who would consent to cross th’ unmeasured main,  
Where mortals dwell not nor make sacrifice  
Of costly hecatombs unto the Gods ?  
But the fixed purpose of great Zeus no God  
May bring to naught by force or subtilty.  
Thou holdest captive, saith the King of Heaven,  
Him, the most luckless of th’ heroic host 120  
Who for nine years round Priam’s city fought ;  
But in the tenth laid waste its palaces,  
And homeward went their way—yet as they went  
They sinned against Athené, and in wrath

The Goddess raised the stormy wind and wave.  
There perished all his trusty crew and friends,  
Save him, whom wind and wave have hither borne.  
Him then Zeus bids thee send from out thine isle  
With utmost speed ; 'tis not his lot to die  
Far from his friends, but he shall see once more 130  
His lofty mansion and his native land."

He said, and on the Goddess fell the chill  
Of sorrow and dismay, but swift she spake ;  
    "O hard and envious are th' Immortal Gods,  
Grudging whene'er amongst the sons of men  
A Goddess finds a partner of her love.  
So when bright Eos to Orion stooped ;  
The happy Gods grudged her and him their bliss,  
Till in Ortygia holy Artemis  
Smote him and slew him with her painless shafts. 140  
So when the golden-tressed Demeter erst,  
In the safe shelter of the thrice-ploughed field,  
Yielded herself in passionate embrace  
Unto Iasion's love, Zeus heard the tale,  
And smote and slew him with his dazzling bolt.  
And now, ye Gods ! ye envy me in turn  
My mortal mate, whom clinging to the keel  
Of his upturned bark alone I saved,  
What time with dazzling bolt Zeus struck the ship  
In the mid tumult of the darkling sea. 150  
There perished all his friends and trusty crew,

Save him whom wind and wave have hither borne.  
And him I loved and tended, and I thought  
To make him such that he should never know  
Old age or death ; but there lives not the God  
Who can deceive or thwart the will of Zeus.  
Then let him go, if Zeus doth so command,  
Forth o'er the barren sea ! Yet will not I  
So send him. I have neither ships nor men  
To bear him o'er the broad depths of the main. 160  
But he shall know—nor will I hide the truth—  
That he unscathed his native land shall see.”

Then to her words the envoy made reply ;  
“Go, bid him speed ; but reverence in thy heart  
Great Zeus, lest His displeasure should awake.”

So spake the God, and forthwith went his way,  
And when the Nymph had heard the will of Zeus,  
She too went forth to where the Hero was.

On the sea-shore he sat. Ever the tears  
Streamed from his eyes ; and, pining for his home, 170  
In all the sweetness of his life he seemed  
To waste away. For her he had no care,  
But in the hollow grot against his will,  
Unloving captive to a loving mate,  
He spent the livelong nights ; and all the day  
On shore and rock reclining he gazed forth  
Over the barren sea, and gazing wept.  
Then by his side she stood, and thus she spake ;

“Cease, O unfortunate, from this thy grief,  
Nor waste thy life in sorrow. Know that I 180  
Will surely send thee hence ; wherefore arise  
And hew thee timbers for a broad-beamed raft,  
And make them fast with brazen nails, and build  
Into high sides the ribs ; that borne on it  
Thou may'st fare safely o'er the misty main.  
But bread and water and the ruddy wine,  
Which cheers man's heart and hunger keeps at bay,  
I will provide, and garments give withal ;  
And I will send the favouring breeze abaft  
To speed thee onward to thy native land ; 190  
If it so be that the Immortal Gods,  
The dwellers of high Heaven, whose thoughts transcend  
My utmost wisdom, shall so purpose it.”

She spake, and o'er the much-tried Hero fell  
The chill of doubt, but swiftly he replied ;

“Say, Goddess, what thy secret purpose is.  
Dost thou in very truth command that I  
On a frail raft should cross the great sea's depths ?  
O hard and perilous the enterprise !  
Not e'en the ships that sail so swift and sure, 200  
Rejoicing in the breeze of heaven, may dare  
To cross those gulfs ; nor in despite of thee  
Dare I commit me to a feeble raft,  
Unless thou swearest with a mighty oath  
That thou dost plan no secret wrong to me.”

So spake the Hero, and the Goddess smiled,  
Soothed him with hand and voice and named his name ;

“ Shrewd and quick-witted thou most surely art,  
That thou hast thought and spoken such a word.  
Be then my witness Earth, and Heaven above,      210  
And the dark flood of Styx that flows below—  
Nor know the blessed Gods an oath more dread—  
That I do plan no secret wrong to thee.  
For thee I thought and counsel take, as though  
Mine were the need and mine th’ extremity.  
Thou know’st my inmost thought ; and true and leal  
And full of pity is my heart to thee.”

She spake, and swiftly led the way, and he  
Followed the footsteps of his Heavenly guide.  
And so the Hero and the Goddess came      220  
Unto the hollow grot. There he sat down  
Whence *Hermes* late had risen, and the Nymph  
Before him spread the savoury food and drink  
Which mortals love, and face to face they sat.  
Before her then her maidens deftly laid  
Ambrosia and the Nectar, food of Gods,  
And to the banquet they stretched forth their hands,  
And took their pleasure of the meat and wine,  
Till in the end *Calypso* thus began ;

“ Son of *Laertes*, of a race divine,      230  
O wise *Odysseus*, dost thou truly yearn  
For a return to home and country dear ?

Then get thee hence—and yet couldst thou foretell  
What sorrows Fortune hath in store for thee,  
E'er thou shalt win thy home, methinks thou'dst stay  
And keep the house with me and live for aye.  
What though thou pinest all and every day  
To see thy wife? Yet am I not less fair  
In nature or in form; for 'tis not meet  
That mortal women with Immortals vie." 240  
To her the wise Odysseus answer made;

“O, be not wrath, great Goddess; well I know  
How by thy side my sage Penelope  
In form and beauty shows less fair, for she  
A mortal is, whilst thou immortal art  
And never growest old; yet much my home  
And the sweet day of my return I crave.  
And if some God should in the darksome sea  
Shatter my bark, yet will I bear my fate,  
Nor lamentation make; for many woes 250  
And many labours both by field and flood  
I've suffered; wherefore let this also be!”

Then the sun set and darkness grew apace;  
But they, within the hollow grot withdrawn,  
Found solace in their loving intercourse.

Now when the rosy-fingered Dawn arose,  
Straightway the Hero cast about his form  
His tunic and his cloak; the Goddess too  
Donned her light beauteous robe, that gleamed afar



With silver tissue, belted round her waist 260  
With fair and golden girdle ; o'er her head  
She drew her veil, for now her mind was set  
To speed the doughty chief upon his way.  
Then in his hands she placed a mighty axe,  
Brazen, two-edged, and fitted to his grasp,  
With smooth and well-wrought haft of olive-wood.  
And yet a smaller polished blade she gave,  
And led the way to the isle's farthest bound,  
Where grew the tallest of the forest trees,  
Alder and poplar and cloud-piercing pine, 270  
Whose dry and seasoned timbers might avail  
Lightly to float his bark across the main.  
But when the Goddess Nymph had shown him where  
The mightiest forest grew, she gat her home,  
And he 'gan hew the timbers ; and, ere long  
The work was wrought. Twenty tall trees he felled,  
And shaped with axe and deftly smoothed the wood,  
And made it true to line. Then came the Nymph  
Bearing the tools, wherewith he pierced each beam  
And made it fit its fellow ; next the whole 280  
He clamped with nails and bound with slabs of wood.  
What breadth of beam a cunning shipwright gives  
Unto the floor of some broad merchantman,  
Such breadth Odysseus gave unto his raft.  
He set the ribs, with braces bound them tight,  
And closed the sides with planks ; then mast and yard

He fitted ; rudder, too, whereby to steer,  
Guarding his craft from stem to stern with fence  
Of wattled osier 'gainst the rough sea's surge.  
No stint was there of timber ; and the Nymph 290  
Brought him of garments store to make him sails.  
And skilfully he wrought them, making fast  
Braces and rope and sheet ; then to the sea,  
Plying with lever, he drew down the raft.

The fourth day came and went, and on the fifth  
The Nymph sent forth the wanderer from her isle,  
Fresh from the bath and clad in scented robe.  
But on the raft two goodly skins she placed,  
One with dark wine, and one with water filled,  
And in his wallet corn and store of food. 300  
Then at her bidding gently blew the wind ;  
And he, exulting in the favouring breeze,  
Unfurled his sail, and sitting by the helm  
Steered warily his bark ; yet on his eyes  
Sleep never fell as through the night he watched  
Arcturus sinking slowly to his rest,  
And the sweet Pleiads and the Bear, whom men  
Oft style the Wain ; who, turning on herself,  
Doth on Orion keep her steadfast watch,  
Alone of constellations dipping not 310  
Into the baths of Ocean. So the Nymph  
Had giv'n commandment he should steer his course,  
And on his left hand ever keep that star.

Full seventeen days he sailed across the sea,  
And on the eighteenth rose upon his sight  
The shadowy hills of the Phæacian land,  
E'en where the shore was nearest—and it seemed  
Like a round shield set in the misty sea.

'Twas then, returning from the Æthiop realm,  
The Ocean God beheld him. From the tops 320  
Of the far Lycian mountains he espied  
The Hero sailing o'er the deep. In wrath  
He shook his head, and to himself thus said ;

“Methinks the Gods have changed their purposes,  
Whilst I was lingering in the Æthiop land.  
He nears already that Phæacian coast,  
Which, if he win, 'tis fated he shall 'scape  
From out the trammels of adversity ;  
And yet I ween that I have still in store  
More than enough for him of misery.” 330

He spake, and round him drew the gathering clouds,  
Stirred with his trident ocean's lowest depths,  
Called from all quarters each tempestuous gale,  
And shrouded land and sea in darkling mist.  
Night fell from heaven and brooded on the main.  
Then blew the East and South, the stormy West,  
And the clear North-Wind rolling the great waves.  
Sank in dismay Odysseus' heart and strength,  
And thus he communed with his patient soul ;

“Woe's me ! is this the end of all my toils ? 340

Sore do I fear the Goddess truly spake,  
That I should much upon the sea endure  
Ere I may win my home. And now methinks  
Her words come true. Lo ! mighty Zeus with cloud  
Encompasses heaven's vault, and stirs the depths  
Of ocean ; far and wide the blustering winds  
Rush down ; and death, deep death is imminent.  
Ah, thrice and four-fold blest those Greeks who fell  
For the Atreidæ fighting around Troy !  
Would that I too had died and met my fate 350  
On that dread day, when o'er Achilles dead  
Round me the Trojan spears fell thick and fast.  
Then I had had each funeral honour paid,  
And Grecian tongues had hymned my praise ; but now  
In shame and death 'tis fated that I fall."

E'en as he spake a mighty rolling wave,  
Hanging o'erhead and following astern,  
Caught him—round spun the raft—he far away  
Into the billows tossed let free the helm.  
Then in the hurricane of struggling winds 360  
The stout mast snapped in twain, and sail and yard  
Lay strewn upon the watery waste. Long time  
Buried beneath the surge the Hero lay ;  
Long time, ere he o'ertopped the swirling wave ;  
For heavy were his clothes, Calypso's gift.  
At length he rose, and casting from his mouth  
The salt sea foam, down-trickling o'er his face,

E'en in extremity he ne'er forgot  
His raft, but borne upon the rolling surge,  
He clung to it and sprang into his seat, 370  
Scarce 'scaping instant death, while to and fro  
The wild waves drove the unresisting bark.  
As when in Autumn-tide the chill north wind  
Sweeps the dry thistles o'er the plain, and they  
Cling to each other, so across the sea  
The rough winds swept the raft, unbroken still.  
The South wind tossed it to the boisterous North,  
In sport the East wind passed it to the West.

But him, thus battling with the stormy flood,  
Fair-ankled Ino, Cadmus' daughter—she, 380  
Who once a mortal with a mortal voice,  
Now shares with Gods the empire of the Main—  
Espied and pitied. From the ooze she rose,  
And like a sea-mew on the wing, she lit  
Upon the raft, and spake ;

“Oh full of grief,  
Why is Poseidon, the earth-shaking Lord,  
So wrath with thee, that he doth vex thee thus?  
Yet shall he not destroy thee utterly  
In his fierce rage. Wherefore do this and live,  
For shrewd art thou of purpose—strip thy weeds, 390  
Give thyself boldly to the flood, and make  
For the Phæacian shore, which Fate hath willed  
That thou shalt surely win. Yet take and bind

Under thy breast this heavenly veil—trust me  
’Twill bear thee safe from suffering and death.  
But when thou touchest with thy hands the shore,  
Unloose my gift, and cast it to the waves  
Far as thou canst, nor throw one look behind.”

So spake the Goddess, and the veil bestowed ;  
Then like a sea-bird on the swelling tide 400  
She sank ; the dark wave hid her from his sight.  
But with himself the Hero counsel took,  
And thus he communed with his steadfast heart ;

“ Woe’s me, lest one of the Immortal Gods  
Is with false counsel weaving some deceit,  
Bidding me leave my raft. So will not I,  
For far off lies the strand which I must win.  
This will I do, for this methinks is best—  
Whilst the stout timbers each to other hold,  
So long will I abide and bear my lot ; 410  
But when the wave shall rend and wreck my raft,  
I’ll swim, and prove my best and only chance.”

While thus the Hero pondered in his mind,  
At fell Poseidon’s bidding rose a wave,  
Awful and huge ; o’er him it hung, then broke  
Th’ o’er-arching vault of waters. Like as when  
The rough wind smites some heap of withered chaff  
And strews it far and wide, so the wave tore  
And strewed the ship’s stout timbers on the main.  
But of those planks Odysseus one bestrode, 420



As one who backs a courser, and cast off  
His weeds, Calypso's gift ; then straightway bound  
Around his breast the veil, and stretching forth  
His hands to swim, fell headlong in the flood.

Poseidon saw and shook his head, and said ;  
"Go now, poor wretch, and wander o'er the sea,  
And seek the hospitality of those  
Whom Zeus loves well ; yet even then I deem  
Thou'lt not think scorn of thy past sufferings."

The Sea God spake, and lashed his fair-maned steeds, 430  
And sped to Ægæ and his glorious halls.

Far other was Athené's mind that day.  
She barred the pathway of each struggling wind,  
And bade them cease, and lull their rage to sleep—  
All save swift Boreas, whom she willed to break  
The fury of the waves, and passage give  
Unto Odysseus, whereby he might 'scape  
Imminent death, and to Phæacia come  
And her sea-faring sons.

Two nights, two days  
On the broad flood he floated to and fro, 440  
And often face to face he looked on death.  
But with the third day came the bright-haired dawn ;  
Sank the rough wind and fell a breathless calm,  
And, as he rode upon the heaving wave,  
Hard by he saw the land. As when the Gods  
Give back in mercy to the children's prayer,

And they with joy unspeakable receive  
The life of a loved father, wasted long  
And worn with suffering, whom some demon fell  
Hath sorely vexed ; so to Odysseus' eyes 450  
Most welcome seemed the sight of land and wood.  
Hard toiled the Hero to approach the strand ;  
But when he came as far as voice might reach,  
And heard the billows breaking on the rocks—  
For fiercely roared the sea on that rough shore  
And wrapped the coast in foam ; no haven there  
Nor sheltering roadstead for the storm-tossed bark,  
But rugged headlands and stern rocks and reefs—  
Then sank Odysseus' strength and heart, and thus  
He sadly questioned with his steadfast soul ; 460  
    “ Ah, little thought I to see land again ;  
Yet Heaven hath willed it. O'er the sea's deep gulfs  
My passage have I cut ; and now appears  
No place of landing from the hoary flood.  
Sharp crags forbid, the breaking surge roars round,  
The smooth cliff rises sheer, and at its base  
The sea rolls deep ; no foot-hold can I spy,  
No refuge from distress ; e'en as I land,  
Perchance some wave may catch me in its gripe,  
And dash me helpless on those flinty rocks, 470  
Making my labour profitless and void.  
Or shall I swim along the shore and seek  
Some shelving bay or harbour's safe retreat ?

Then much I fear lest some fresh storm arise  
And sweep me back—me most unfortunate—  
Into the ocean, or that some huge fish,  
Such as attend on Amphitrite's call,  
May fall upon me, by Poseidon sent ;  
For well I know the God's undying wrath."

Whilst thus the Hero pondered in his mind, 480  
A huge wave bore him swiftly to the beach.  
Then had his bones been broken on those rocks,  
And the skin torn from off his limbs, but that,  
Inspired by Pallas, quick the ready wit  
Sprang to his mind, and with both hands the rock  
He clasped, and gasping clung until the wave  
Rolled by him. Yet was not the peril past,  
For once again the angry reflux surge  
Back sweeping to the ocean smote him there,  
And cast him far from shore. And like as when 490  
From its retreat some polypus is torn,  
And to its claws the sand and pebbles cling,  
So on the rocks his scarred hands left the trace,  
As 'neath the tide he sank. In that hour sure  
He must have perished, and e'en Fate itself  
Was powerless to save ; but counsel shrewd  
Athené gave ; and rising from the wave  
Beyond the surf, that thundered on the shore,  
He steered his course, straining his eyes to find  
Some shelving bay or harbour's safe retreat, 500

Till to the mouth of a fair stream he came,  
A favoured spot ; where covert from the wind  
And a smooth beach gave access. There he marked  
The stream, and thus its gentle flood addressed ;

“Hear, River King, whoe’er thou art, to thee—  
Long sought, long prayed for—to thee do I come,  
Flying the sea and stern Poseidon’s wrath.  
E’en with th’ Immortal Gods a mortal man,  
Outcast and suppliant, may pity find ;  
And so in this my sorrow do I crave, 510  
From thee and from thy flood, deliverance sure.”

The Stream-God heard and calmed his troubled tide  
And stilled the waves and smoothed the watery path,  
And in the outflow of the gentle flood  
Received the Hero. But as he touched land,  
Failed his stout limbs and hands, failed his strong heart ;  
Swollen all his frame ; from eyes and nose and face  
The salt sea dripped ; sans breath and speech he lay,  
Faint and o’er-mastered by the deadly toil.  
But when he breathed again and life returned, 520  
He loosed the veil by the sea Goddess given,  
And cast it in the river. Down the tide  
A huge wave bore it, and with outstretched hands  
Ino took back her gift ; but he, escaped  
From out the stream, sank on a rushy plot,  
And kissed the kindly earth, and thus he said ;

“Woe’s me, what grief, what fate is yet in store ?

If by the river through the weary night  
I keep my watch, all spent and faint with toil,  
The biting frost and dew will soon o'erwhelm 530  
My spirit ; for with early dawn the breeze  
Blows cold from off the stream ; or if I climb  
Yon neighbouring hill and in the shadowy wood  
'Mid the thick bushes slumber, and sweet sleep  
Visit my eyes, perchance some savage beast  
Shall seize and rend me."

Thus in close debate  
With his own mind the Hero weighed each course ;  
Then to the wood he went. On airy site,  
And neighbouring to the flood below, it stood.  
There in two bushes on a common stem, 540  
One the sweet olive—one the wilder sort—  
He chose his dwelling. Through that covert thick  
The moist winds blew not, nor the blazing sun  
Smote with his beams, nor drave the piercing shower,  
But thick and intertwined the branches grew.  
'Neath them Odysseus crept, and heaped a couch  
Of the dry leaves ; small stint of these was there,  
But ample store, enough to shield from cold  
Two or three men in dreariest winter-tide.  
Odysseus saw, and in his soul rejoiced, 550  
And laid him down and o'er him piled the leaves.  
Like as when on the verge of some far field,  
Where stands no neighbouring homestead, men heap up

Some smouldering ember with the ashes grey,  
And guard from wind and keep the spark alive ;  
So heaped the Hero o'er him the dry leaves,  
And kind Athené poured upon him sleep—  
Rest to his eyelids, surcease of his toils.



BOOK VI

## SUMMARY OF BOOK VI

ATHENÉ appears in a vision to Nausicaa, the fair daughter of King Alcinous, as she sleeps, and suggests to her to go forth in the morning with her maidens to the river to wash linen for the household.

Alcinous having given his consent, the maidens go forth, and after the washing is done they play at ball ; but the ball falls into the river and is lost, and at the loss of it they cry out. Their cries arouse Odysseus, who emerges from the covert where he was sleeping, and terrifies all the maidens, except Nausicaa.

Odysseus addresses Nausicaa with great tact, and she replies with equal discretion. She reproves her maidens for their alarm, and clothes him ; and Athené sheds upon him a superhuman grace and beauty. She then directs him to her father's palace, and drives there with her maidens, whilst he follows on foot.

## BOOK VI

WHILST, overcome with sleep and spent with toil,  
The patient godlike Chief there took his rest,  
To the Phæacian folk Athené went.  
In Hypereia, whose broad ways were known  
For dance and song, hard by the Cyclop land,  
They erst had dwelt, but there the Cyclops fierce  
Dealt hardly with them, and Nausithous,  
Their godlike guide and champion, led them forth,  
To Scheria, far away from mortal men,  
And drew a wall around their town, and built    10  
Houses for men and temples for the Gods,  
And set the bounds to fields ; but he ere this  
Had bowed to Fate, and now in his stead reigned,  
Taught by the all-wise Gods, Alcinous ;  
Unto whose palace, planning a return  
For stout Odysseus to his native land,  
The grey-eyed Goddess went.    There in a bower

Wrought with most cunning craft, a maiden slept,  
In form and face to an Immortal like,  
Nausicaa, daughter of Alcinous. 20

And by the pillars of the door there lay  
Two handmaids whom the Graces had endowed  
With loveliness. The shining doors were closed,  
But like a breath of air the Goddess passed,  
And stood above the sleeping maiden's head.  
The form of Dyneas' daughter she had ta'en—  
Dyneas famed mariner—in years alike  
And to Nausicaa most dear of friends.  
So feigning this fair maid Athené spake ;

“Oh what a careless child thy mother hath 30  
In thee Nausicaa, thy garments bright  
Uncared lie by thee, and thy marriage day  
Is close at hand, when gaily robed thyself  
Thou shalt give gifts to others, who shall lead  
Thee forth in glad procession ; for thence grows  
Praise amongst men and joy of heart to sire  
And honoured mother. Go we forth to wash  
At daybreak ; I will bear thee company,  
That thou may'st make thee ready ; for not long  
Shalt thou unwedded be. The noblest youths 40  
Of thine own people, the Phæacian race,  
Seek thee in marriage, wherefore rise and pray  
Thy noble Father that he send thee forth  
With mules and with a wain, that they may bear

The clothes, the garments, and the shining robes ;  
For far beyond the city lies the place  
Where thou shalt wash, and better 'tis to go  
In chariot than afoot."

The Goddess spake ;  
And to Olympus, where th' Immortal Gods  
Hold, as men say, their fixed abode, she sped. 50  
No storm blast shakes, no rain bedews those Courts,  
Ne'er falls the snow, all cloudless spreads the air,  
And the white sheen of daylight floats o'er all.  
There the blest Gods their pleasure take all day,  
And thither too, when she had made an end  
Of counselling the maid, Athené went.

Then on her throne the Dawn of day appeared,  
And from her sleep the wondering maid awoke,  
Yet tarried not the vision to declare  
Unto her sire and mother. Them she found 60  
Within the palace ; She by the hearth-stone  
Was sitting with her handmaids as she spun  
The purple yarn from distaff ; Him she met  
As he went forth to Council with the Chiefs  
And Nobles of Phæacia. Then she spake  
As she stood by him ;

" Prithee, Father dear,  
Can'st grant me a stout wain with lofty wheels  
To bear unto the river and to wash  
Our goodly raiment ? seemly 'tis that thou

Should in the Council of thy Peers sit clothed 70  
In newly washen robes ; five sons beside  
Thou hast born to thee in thy halls, of whom  
Two married are and three are sturdy youths,  
Who in fresh clothes apparelled love to go  
Forth to the dance. For all these household cares  
I have ta'en thought."

So spake she, but she feared  
To name the name of marriage ; but her sire  
Perceived her secret thought and thus replied ;

"Nor mules nor aught beside I grudge my child ;  
So let the slaves make ready a stout wain 80  
With awning furnished and on high wheels set."

Then to the slaves he gave command, and they  
Straightway made ready the swift wain, and led  
And harnessed to the chariot yoke the mules.  
Meanwhile the maiden from her chamber brought  
The shining raiment, and inside the car  
She duly placed it, while her mother's care  
Within a casket choicest dainties stored,  
Wine in a goat-skin, and in flask of gold  
Oil to anoint her handmaids and herself 90  
After the bath. Then the maiden clomb  
Into the car and grasped the shining reins  
And smote the mules with whip. Loud rang the hoofs  
As forth they bounded with the double load  
Of maid and clothes ; yet not alone went she



For all her handmaids kept her company.  
Now when they came to the fair river's side,  
Where flowed the living fountains, and the flood  
Welled forth in bright abundance to wash clean  
The foulest robes, there from the wain the maids 100  
Loosened the mules, and turned them free to crop  
The honied clover by the eddying stream.  
Next to the trenches they bore forth the clothes,  
And trampled them in eager rivalry  
Till they had cleansed them from each soil and stain;  
Then spread them out to dry upon the beach,  
Where the sea wave that beat upon the shore  
Had washed the pebbles clean. Their task now done,  
They bathed, and all anointed with fresh oil  
They spread their meal beside the river bank, 110  
And waited till the sun had dried the clothes;  
But when the feast was o'er they cast away  
Their veils, and fell to play with flying ball,  
And the white-armed Nausicaa 'gan sing.  
As when the huntress Queen on mountain-side  
Adown Taygetus, or on the ridge  
Of lofty Erimanthus, speeds the chase  
Of boar or hind, and with her the wild Nymphs,  
Daughters of Zeus, the ægis-bearing Lord,  
Their pastime take, and Leto's heart grows glad, 120  
As above all with head and lofty brow  
Most easy to be known the Goddess towers;

So fairest far of that fair company  
The peerless maid outshone her maidens all.

Now when the mules were harnessèd, and the clothes  
Were duly folded, and Nausicaa  
Was minded to pursue her homeward way,  
Athené, grey-eyed Goddess, counsel took,  
That when Odysseus should from sleep awake  
His eyes should light upon the lovely maid, 130  
To be his guide to the Phæacian town.

And so it chanced the ball the Princess threw  
Unto her handmaids missed the mark, and fell  
Into the swirl of the deep-eddying stream ;  
Whereat they cried aloud, and the stout Chief,  
Awoke, sat up, and questioned with himself ;

“Woe’s me, what land of mortal men is this ?  
Are they some savage race sans law and right ?  
Or kind to strangers, of God-fearing mood ?  
The voice of maidens strikes upon my ear ; 140  
Is it the Nymphs who haunt the mountain-tops,  
And dwell in river founts and grassy meads,  
Or am I near to men of human speech ?  
I’ll trial make and see.”

He spake, and crept  
From out his covert, breaking a thick bough  
Wherewith to clothe himself. And so he went,  
As goes a mountain lion in his strength  
Through rain and storm, and in his eyes a flame

Glares murderous, as when on herds or flocks  
Or the wild hart intent, he fareth forth, 150  
For famine pangs drive him to make assault  
Against the weaklings of the crowded fold.  
So was Odysseus 'mid those fair-tressed girls  
Constrained though naked to come forth ; and fierce  
And terrible he seemed stained with the brine.  
And in disorder and dismay they fled  
By shelving edge and jutting spit of shore.  
But not Alcinous' daughter. She stood fast ;  
Athené gave her courage, and her limbs  
Shook not with fear, but firm she stood and stayed 160  
His coming. Then Odysseus doubted sore  
Whether to kneel at the fair maiden's knee,  
Or stand aloof and plead with winning words,  
That she should give him raiment and a guide  
Unto the town. And as he mused he deemed  
Better it were to stand apart and plead  
With honied words, rather than humbly clasp  
Her knees and anger her. So with soft speech  
And cunning he began ;

“Tell me, O Queen,  
Art thou of mortal lineage or divine ? 170  
If thou art one of Heaven's high company  
Most like thou art, methinks, to Artemis,  
Daughter of Zeus, in stature and in face ;  
But if thou art of them who dwell on earth,

Thrice happy, then, thy sire and mother too,  
And thy fond brothers, when with pride they see  
Thee, like some lovely flower, adorn the dance ;  
But happiest he of all the sons of men,  
Who with his wedding gifts shall win thy love,  
And lead thee to his home.   Never before   180  
Have mine eyes lit on such a peerless form  
Of man or woman ; as I gaze my heart  
Flows o'er with reverent awe.   Yet I recall  
How that in Delos once within the shrine,  
Beside Apollo's altar I beheld  
The tender sapling of a palm-tree grow.  
For I was there, one of a mighty host  
Bound on a journey full of woe to me—  
And as I gazed I marvelled in myself  
At that most goodly plant ; so, Lady, now   190  
When I see thee, I marvel and I fear  
E'en in the midst of grief to clasp thy knees.

For twenty days the tempest and the wave  
Had borne me onward from Ogygia's isle,  
Till yesterday I 'scaped the darkling sea ;  
And now some God hath cast me on this shore  
That I may yet endure a further grief ;  
For well I trow the Gods have much in store  
That I must suffer ere the end shall come.  
Then deign, O Queen, to pity me.   To thee,   200  
First do I turn after unnumbered ills,

Nor of the dwellers of this town and land  
Is one known to me. Guide me to the town,  
Give me some shred of clothing that has wrapped  
The linen thou hast here, and may the Gods  
Grant thee thy heart's desires, husband and home,  
And union free from discord ; for, know this,  
That life hath nought more noble or more pure  
Than when a husband and a wife keep house  
With undivided hearts. Their harmony 210  
To foes brings envy and to friends brings joy,  
And to themselves life's sweetest happiness."

Then in reply the white-armed maiden spake ;  
"Stranger, thou bearest in thy face no guile  
Nor look of folly ; 'tis Olympian Zeus  
Who unto men, evil and good alike,  
Grants or refuses happiness ;  
From His hand come the issues of thy fate,  
And thou must needs endure. Wherefore since thou  
Art to our city and our people come 220  
Nor raiment shalt thou lack nor aught beside  
Which care-worn suppliant may claim ; and I  
Will to our city guide thee and declare  
Our people's name. Know then this is the town  
And land of the Phæacians, and that I  
Am daughter of the great Alcinous,  
On whom doth hang the might and majesty  
Of all Phæacia."

So she spake, and then  
She to her fair-tressed handmaids gave command ;  
    “Stand fast, my maidens, whither do ye fly 230  
From presence of one man ? deem not in him  
Ye see a foeman. There lives not the man,  
And never may there be, who to our land  
Shall come in hostile guise ; for dear are we  
To the Immortal Gods, and far apart  
In the wide wash of ocean’s surge we dwell  
Of mortals the most distant ; never comes  
Stranger to mingle with our race. But he,  
This hapless wanderer, is our guest, and we  
Must tend him, for Zeus bringeth to our doors 240  
The stranger and the poor, and a small gift  
Availeth much. Give him then food and drink,  
And in the stream sheltered from chilly blast  
See that ye bathe him.”

So she spake, and they  
Stood fast and each upon the other called,  
And at the bidding of Nausicaa  
They led Odysseus to a sheltered spot.  
Beside him they a cloak and tunic laid,  
And olive-oil in golden flask contained,  
And bade him bathe in the clear river-stream. 250  
But to the maidens said the noble Chief ;  
    “Stand ye aloof, fair maidens, whilst I wash  
The brine from off my shoulders, and with oil



Anoint me ; long it is since on my skin  
Soft oil has fallen, but I may not bathe  
In open presence of these fair-tress'd maids."

He spake, and they withdrew them and declared  
His words unto their mistress, and the Chief  
Washed in the river-flood the brine that clung  
To his stout shoulders, and from off his face 260  
Wiped the salt spray of the unfruitful sea.

When he was clean with water and with oil,  
And donned the raiment which the virgin gave,  
Then did Athené make him to appear

Of loftier stature and of goodlier form,  
And caused the softly-waving locks to flow  
From off his head like hyacinthine flower.

As when some craftsman, skilled in all the arts  
Of Pallas or Hephæstos, overlays

The silver handiwork with gold design 270  
Of wondrous beauty ; so Athené shed  
O'er head and shoulders an unearthly charm.

But on the sea-shore all apart he sat  
Radiant in beauty, and the Princess gazed  
On him with wonder, and thus spake ;

" Give ear,

My white-armed maidens. Not without the will  
Of the great Gods who in Olympus rule  
Cometh this stranger 'mid the race divine  
Of the Phæacians ; surely I at first

Deemed him of lowly and unlovely mien ; 280  
But now he bears him like a God of Heaven.  
Ah, would that one as goodly were my mate  
Here to abide and dwell with me ! But come,  
Come ye, my handmaids, give him meat and drink."

She spake, and they gave ear, and meat and drink  
Before Odysseus spread, and eagerly  
He ate and drank ; long time it was since food  
Had passed his lips. Meanwhile Nausicaa  
On other thoughts intent folded the clothes,  
And laid them in the car and yoked the mules, 290  
Entered herself and to Odysseus spake ;

"Rise up, O stranger, let us to the town,  
And I will bring thee to the Palace Hall  
Of my wise father ; there shalt thou, I trow,  
Have sight and speech of our Phæacian chiefs.  
But mark what thou must do ; for thou, methinks,  
Art not slow-witted. So long as our road  
'Mid fields and human habitation goes,  
Thou with my handmaids on the car shalt wait,  
And follow swiftly whilst I lead the way ; 300  
And to the City we ere long shall come.  
A high and tower'd wall doth fence it in,  
And a fair harbour on each hand doth lie  
With narrow entrance ; there on either side  
Stand the deep-waisted galleys on the shore,  
For each man's bark hath its allotted place.

There too the market-place, with massy stone  
And deep foundations set, which girdleth round  
Poseidon's goodly shrine, and there our men  
Look to the tackle of the ships, make fast 310  
Cables and sails, or smooth the polished oars.  
For not in bow or quiver do our folk  
Take their delight, but in the mast and oar,  
And in the well-trimmed bark, wherein they fare  
With gladsome heart across the hoary main.  
The idle talk of these men would I shun,  
For slanderous tongues there are amid the crowd ;  
Lest some base babbler meet me on my way  
And haply say, ' Who is this stranger fair  
And tall, who waiteth on Nausicaa ? 320  
Where found she this strange husband ? surely he  
Is some sea-rover from a foreign land,  
For we have none such here ; or at her prayer  
Some God hath come from Heaven to be her mate  
All her life long. O, bravely hath she done  
To fare abroad to find a husband there—  
She who thus flouts the noblest of her race  
Who crowd to win her love !' So might they speak,  
And I should have reproach. Yea, in good sooth  
I think but lightly of the maid who dares 330  
So to consort with men, heedless of friends  
And of her living sire's and mother's will,  
Before the day of open wedlock come.

Give ear then, stranger, to my words, and so,  
My sire shall send thee with due escort home.

Hard by the road a beauteous poplar grove  
With meadow girdled and by fountain fed,  
Unto Athené sacred, thou shalt find.  
There lies my Father's plot of fruitful land  
And fenced domain, beyond the town so far 340  
As human voice may reach ; there sit thee down  
And wait until such time as we may come  
Unto the City and my Father's house.  
But when thou deemest I have reached my home,  
Then to the City wend thy way and seek  
The palace of my Sire Alcinous.

'Tis easy to be known ; a child, methinks,  
Might be thy guide ; no other house so fair  
Of the Phæacian people can be found  
As of my hero Father. But when thou 350  
Shalt come beneath the shadow of its roof,  
Pass swiftly through the hall, and thou shalt find  
My Mother sitting in the ruddy light  
Beside the hearth, spinning in wondrous wise  
The purple thread of wool. Her chair doth rest  
Against a pillar, whilst behind her are  
Her maids, and by her stands my Father's throne,  
Whereon like an Immortal God he sits  
And quaffs his wine. Him stay not to address,  
But clasp my Mother's knees, so shalt thou hail 360

Soon and with joy the day of thy return,  
Though thou art come from a far distant shore.  
If she be gracious thou may'st hope to see  
Thy friends, thy palace, and thy native land."

She said, and with the shining lash she touched  
The mules, and soon the stream was left behind.  
So well with trot and walk they made their way,  
So well the Princess drove them, that on foot  
Odysseus and her maidens followed close,  
For skilful was her hand upon the rein. 370  
The sun sank low as they drew near the grove,  
And there Odysseus sat him down and prayed  
Unto Athené, daughter of great Zeus ;

"Hear me, unwearied Goddess, child of Zeus,  
List now, though erst thou didst not deign to hear,  
When the earth-shaking God shattered my bark,  
Grant me that I may grace and favour find  
With the Phæacian people."

So he prayed,  
And Pallas heard him, yet did not reveal  
Her presence visible, for much she feared 380  
Her Father's brother, whose fierce anger burned  
So sore against Odysseus till the time,  
When to his home the Godlike Chief should come.





BOOK VII

## SUMMARY OF BOOK VII

NAUSICAA returns to her home and Odysseus follows her on foot. Outside the town Athené appears to him in the form of a young maiden carrying a pitcher, and guides him under cover of a mist to the Palace of King Alcinous.

The wonders of the palace, its splendour, and the beauty of its gardens, are described.

Odysseus enters the palace, still clad in a thick mist, and sitting down in the ashes by the hearth implores the protection of Queen Areté. He is graciously received by Alcinous and Areté, and a council of Phæacian chiefs is appointed for the morrow. Then Areté, in true feminine fashion, taking notice of the garments which her daughter, Nausicaa, had given to Odysseus, questions him of them and of himself; and he tells briefly the story of his wanderings, from the time when he landed on Calypso's island to his meeting with Nausicaa.

## BOOK VII

THUS prayed the Godlike and longsuffering Chief,  
And the Princess her swift mules bore along  
Unto the City. But when she had come  
To the renowned palace of her Sire,  
She stayed her by the gates, and round her car  
Crowded her brethren like in form to Gods,  
And loosed the mules and bore the clothes within.  
But to her bower she went, and there a fire  
Eurymedusa kindled on the hearth—  
Eurymedusa, ancient dame, whom erst                    10  
From Apeirea the deep-waisted ships  
Bore as the prize for King Alcinous,  
Whom the Phæacians revered as a God.  
She was Nausicaa's nurse, and she was wont  
To light the fire and to prepare the meal.  
Then to the town Odysseus took his way,  
But as he went Athené of her grace

Wrapped him in mist, lest some proud passer-by  
Of the Phæacian folk, with flout and gibe,  
Might question who he was. Now as he stood 20  
Hard by the entrance of the pleasant town,  
The grey-eyed Goddess met him in the way,  
Like some young girl with pitcher on her arm,  
And stood before him, whom he thus addressed ;

“Canst say, my child, where dwells Alcinous  
The Ruler of this land? Hapless and strange  
I hither come from a far-distant realm,  
And none I know who here amid the works  
And labours of their hands their dwelling have.”

To him the grey-eyed Goddess answer made ; 30  
“Surely, good Father, I will be thy guide  
Unto the house thou seekest ; my own sire  
Dwelleth hard by. So follow silently,  
Nor look on any man nor question ask,  
For our folk suffer not a stranger’s face,  
Nor care to welcome one from foreign lands ;  
Their trust they put in the swift ships, wherein  
They cross the depths of Ocean. Such the boon  
Of the Earth-shaker ; swift their galleys are,  
Like the bird’s pinion or the flash of thought.” 40

Athené spake, and swiftly led the way,  
And in her steps he followed ; all unseen  
By the Phæacian mariners he passed  
Adown the city through their midst ; for so

Fair-tressed Athené, awful Goddess, willed ;  
Who of her grace and care around him cast  
The covering of a cloud. Marvelled the Chief  
To see the havens and the well-trimmed ships,  
Th' assemblies of the heroes, and the walls  
Lofty and long, with wondrous palisade. 50

But when they came unto the far-famed halls,  
Where dwelt the King, the grey-eyed Goddess spake ;

“ Here, stranger Father, is the house whereof  
Thou art in quest, and wherein thou shalt find  
The Heaven-born kings carousing at the feast.

Then go thou in and fear not—in life's ways  
The man who fearless is shall bear him best,  
Whatever land he chance on. In that hall  
The first that thou shalt see its mistress is,  
By name Areté ; of the self-same stock 60

She came whence sprang Alcinous the King.

First of his line, Nausithous was born

Of Peribœa and th' earth-shaking God ;

For she the loveliest of women was,

The youngest daughter of Eurymedon,

King of the haughty giants, who whilom

Destroyed that wicked race, then died himself.

Poseidon loved her, and to him she bore

Noble Nausithous, Phæacian prince ;

But by Nausithous begotten were 70

Rhexenor and Alcinous, of whom

Rhexenor, a young bridegroom in these halls,  
Fell smitten by Apollo's silver bow.  
Childless he was, save of one girl alone,  
Areté, whom Alcinous espoused,  
And honours her as mortal women ne'er  
Were honoured of their household and their lords.  
Such reverence she receives from husband, child,  
And people ; who, whene'er she walks abroad,  
Make glad acclaim, and deem that they behold 80  
A Goddess in their streets. And sure she hath  
A noble understanding, and where'er  
Her favour lights, on women or on men,  
She makes to cease the bitterness of strife.  
If she be gracious thou may'st hope once more  
To see thy friends, thy home, thy native land."

Athené spake, and o'er the barren sea  
She took her flight ; fair Scheria soon she left  
Behind her till to Marathon she came  
And wide-wayed Athens, where Erectheus' house 90  
Throws its broad shadow ; there she entered in.

But to Alcinous' renowned abode  
Odysseus went ; yet ere his footstep crossed  
The brazen threshold deep in thought he stood ;  
For, as with gleam of sunshine or of moon,  
Bright shone the royal house ; this way and that  
From inmost chamber to the threshold ran  
The walls of brass, and round them went a frieze



Of dark blue colour ; golden were the gates  
That closed the entrance of the goodly house. 100  
But in the brazen threshold there were set  
The silver door-posts, and above them laid  
A silver lintel ; but the ring was gold.  
On either hand in silver and in gold,  
Wrought by the cunning of Hephæstos, stood  
Great hounds to guard the house ; deathless they are,  
Immortal to all time. On every side,  
From threshold to the inmost chamber ranged,  
Along the walls were chairs of state, on each  
A deftly-woven coverlet was spread, 110  
The work of women's hands. There at a feast,  
Which knows no stint, sit the Phæacian chiefs,  
And eat and drink their fill, while high aloft,  
Fashioned in gold and set on pedestals,  
The forms of youths uphold the blazing lights,  
And make night radiant to the revellers.  
Meanwhile some fifty bond-maids in the hall  
Grind the white corn, and sit and weave the web  
And ply the distaff, restless in their tasks  
As poplar leaves that shimmer in the breeze ; 120  
Such and so cunning is that linen web  
That the soft oil flows off and leaves it dry.  
For as Phæacia's mariners excel  
All other folk in sailing o'er the seas,  
So have her women skill to ply the loom.

Such wit and wisdom hath Athené given  
To them in all their gracious handiwork.

Hard by the gates, without a courtyard, lies  
A goodly orchard, some four acres wide,  
Fenced in on either hand ; within its pale 130  
The tall trees stand and blossom ; there the pear,  
The bright-hued apple, and pomegranate grow,  
The blooming olive and the luscious fig,  
Whose fruit the livelong year nor fails nor fades  
In winter's cold and summer's heat ; but aye  
The soft West-Wind ripens or brings to birth  
Each in due season. Pear to pear succeeds ;  
And fig and apple and the clustering grape  
Their harvest yield. There in a fruitful field  
A vineyard is laid out ; part level ground 140  
Lies open to the sun, in other part  
Men gather grapes or tread them in the press.  
In the front row the unripe clusters hang  
And shed their blossom ; meanwhile other grapes  
Grow dark unto the vintage, but beside  
The farthest row lies many a garden plot,  
In constant beauty and in order trim.  
Therein two fountains are, whereof the one  
Waters that garden close, the other stream  
Beside the stately mansion and beneath 150  
The threshold of the Court pursues its way,  
And yields the citizens its limpid wealth.

Such gifts the Gods gave to Alcinous.

So there awhile the much-enduring Chief  
Stood with admiring gaze, then swiftly passed  
Across the palace threshold ; where within  
Sat the Phæacian nobles at the board  
Making libation, as their custom is,  
Of their last cups unto the keen-eyed God,  
Slayer of Argos, ere they go to rest. 160

But through the hall, wrapped in the darkling mist  
Shed round him by Athené, went the Chief,  
Till to Areté and Alcinous

He came ; then suppliant-wise he clasped her knees,  
And the thick cloud that shadowed him fell off.  
At sight of him the feasters in that hall  
Speechless and wondering gazed. So he began ;

“ Rhexenor’s child, Areté, here to thee  
And to thy husband and these noble guests  
I make my humble prayer, cast on your shores 170  
After sore travail. May th’ Immortal Gods  
Grant you a happy life, and grace to leave  
Unto your children store of household goods,  
Crowned with such honours as the public voice  
Hath granted to you ; wherefore send me home,  
For much I suffer far away from friends.”

He said, and in the ashes on the hearth  
He sat him down, and silence fell on all,  
Till Echenéus, aged hero, spake ;

Eldest was he of all Phæacia's chiefs, 180  
Gifted in speech and skilled in ancient lore,  
And now in gracious words he thus began ;  
    " It ill beseemeth thee, Alcinous,  
That in the ashes by the fireside  
Thy guest, a suppliant, sits, while we, thy friends,  
Waiting the word from thee, refrain from speech.  
Nay, bid him rise, and set him on this chair  
Studded with silver nails, and give command  
Unto the heralds to pour out the wine,  
That we may make libation unto Zeus, 190  
The Thunderer and Friend of suppliants.  
And let the house-dame from her store within  
Bring forth the stranger's meal."

                                    The stout king heard,  
And took Odysseus' hand and raised him up,  
Great Chief of wit and counsel manifold ;  
And placed him on the shining chair of state,  
Whereon beside him sat Laodamas  
His best-beloved son. Then came a maid  
Bearing a golden ewer in her hands,  
Wherewith she poured into a silver dish, 200  
And drew a polished table to his side.  
Meanwhile a reverend house-dame brought the bread  
And choicest dainties from her bounteous store.  
Odysseus ate and drank, till the stout king  
Upon Pontonous the herald called,

And bade him mix and bear the wine to all ;  
That they might fit libation make to Zeus,  
The Thunderer and Friend of suppliants.

The herald heard, and mixed the honied wine,  
And for the solemn rite each cup he filled, 210  
Till, when libation had been fully made,  
And they had drunk unto their hearts' content,  
Alcinous thus spake ;

“ Lords, counsellors

Of the Phæacian people, lend your ears,  
Whilst I declare the purpose of my heart.  
The feast is o'er ; go ye and seek repose ;  
But with to-morrow's dawn we will convene,  
A fuller council, entertain our guest,  
And to the Gods make solemn sacrifice.  
Then for this stranger we will take due thought, 220  
That by our guidance, without toil or pain  
Swiftly and gladly he may reach his home,  
Though distant far it be, nor in mid-way  
Or harm or loss befall him ; afterward  
What Fate hath ordered and the Sisters stern  
Into the thread of his existence span,  
What time his mother gave him birth, must be.  
But if he be a visitant from Heaven,  
And of immortal race, why then the Gods  
Have some fixed purpose to fulfil to-day ; 230  
For they are wont, when we make sacrifice

Of glorious hecatombs, to show themselves  
In presence visible, sit at our board,  
Join in our feast, or meet us in our way  
In undisguised brightness ; for we come  
Of kindred blood, as is the Cyclop race,  
And the wild Giant tribes."

Him answer made

The wise Odysseus ;

"Deem not so, O King ;

I have no semblance or in form or race  
To the Immortal dwellers of wide Heaven ;      240  
A mortal man I am, most like to one,  
Who stoops beneath the heaviest load of grief.  
Yet I might tell a tale of other woes  
Which by the will of Heaven I have endured.  
But first I fain would sup, for there is nought  
E'en to the trouble-laden, as the sting  
Of hunger, which hath a remembrance keen  
In hour of need or sorrow. So the grief  
That fills my soul now bids me eat and drink,  
And dulls the memory of labours past.      250  
But with the shining of to-morrow's dawn  
Rouse ye, that I may set my foot again  
Upon my native land—ah me ! my land,  
When I behold it, and my own domain,  
My serfs, my stately palace, may I die !"

He said ; and they, consenting to his speech,



Were fain to speed him on his way, for that  
He well had spoken. So when they had made  
Solemn libation, and had drunk their fill,  
They to their homes departed, and their rest. 260

But with the guests Odysseus went not forth,  
But by Areté and Alcinous  
He sat him down, the while the handmaids cleared  
The board ; then first white-armed Areté spake,  
For she had marked the tunic and the cloak  
And the fair garments which Odysseus wore,  
Which, with her maidens, she herself had wrought.

“Forgive me, stranger, if I first,” she said,  
“Ask thee this question. Whence art thou, and who  
Gave thee these garments, for methought thou saidst 270  
Thou camest hither wandering o’er the sea ?”

To’ whom the wise Odysseus answer made,  
“’Tis hard, O Queen, the story to rehearse  
Of all the sorrows which the Gods have laid  
Upon me ; yet your pleasure shall be done.  
Far in mid ocean lies Ogygia’s isle,  
Wherein Calypso, awful Goddess, dwells,  
Fair-tressed Calypso, Atlas’ crafty child.  
She knows no visitant, or God, or man,  
Yet me most hapless did my fate compel 280  
To seek the refuge of her hearth, what time  
Zeus in mid ocean smote with dazzling bolt  
My bark. There perished all my crew ; alone

To the ship's keel I clung, and for nine days  
Was driven to and fro upon the deep,  
Till on the tenth in darkness and in night  
The Gods conveyed me to Ogygia's isle,  
Where dwells Calypso, awful Goddess. She  
Succoured and entertained me, and she willed  
To make me deathless, nor to know old age. 290  
Yet all in vain, she could not move my heart.

There seven long years I dwelt, with ceaseless tears  
Th' ambrosial robes bedewing which she gave.  
But when the eighth year came, whether by Zeus  
Or her own fancy moved, she bade me go ;  
And on a well-built raft with store of gifts  
And bread, and wine, and clothes, that waxed not old,  
She sped me on my way, sending abaft  
A soft and gentle breeze. For seventeen days  
I sailed upon the deep ; on the eighteenth 300  
The shadowy hill-tops of your land appeared,  
And filled my heart with joy—unhappy me,  
To whom 'twas fated that misfortune sore  
Should be companion. So Poseidon willed,  
Who stirred the winds and barred the ocean ways,  
And raised the wave ; nor might the tossing raft  
Longer upbear me grieving bitterly.  
'Twas scattered on the storm. Swimming for life  
I clove the mighty deep, till wind and wave  
Cast me upon your coasts ; but then the surge 310

Had well-nigh 'whelmed me, as I strove to land,  
And dashed me on those rough and cheerless cliffs,  
But that once more I made for sea, and swam,  
Till in a river's mouth I could descry,  
Where free from rock and sheltered from the blast  
The fittest landing showed. There I came forth,  
And taking heart once more sank down to earth ;  
And night closed over me. But I went up  
Far from the cloud-fed stream and laid me down  
Amid the bushes, and upon me heaped 320  
The fallen leaves ; and on my eyes the God  
Shed a deep slumber. So the livelong night  
Until the morrow's dawn and to midday  
Amid the leaves I sadly took my rest.  
Anon the sun went down and I awoke,  
And saw thy daughter's handmaids on the shore  
At play ; but She among them stately moved  
Like some fair Goddess, and to her I prayed.  
Nor did she judgment lack—scarce would you chance  
To fall on one so young and yet so wise ; 330  
For wisdom dwells not with the young. But she  
Fed me with bread and wine and bade me wash,  
And clothed me with these garments. Such my tale,  
And, though in sadness, I have told thee true.”  
To him Alcinous replied ;

“ O Guest,

My daughter erred in that she brought thee not

With her handmaidens into these our halls,  
For she it was to whom thy prayer was made."

To him the wise Odysseus answer made ;  
"Nay, noble Lord, chide not the faultless maid ; 340  
She truly bade me follow in her train ;  
But I had reverence for her, and I feared  
The sight of me might thy displeasure move,  
For jealous are the tribes of mortal men."

Straightway to him replied Alcinous ;  
"Nay, Stranger, deem not 'tis my wonted mood  
Thus without reason to be wroth ; I hold  
An even mind to be man's better part.  
Would to Athené, or Apollo, would  
To Zeus, our Sire, that being what thou art 350  
And minded like myself thou wouldst espouse  
My daughter, and dwell here, and be my son ;  
For I would give thee house and ample wealth,  
If thou wouldst willingly abide with us.  
Yet none against thy will shall keep thee here  
For that were hateful to our Father Zeus ;  
And for thy going I do here ordain  
To-morrow sure ; meanwhile in slumber lulled  
Thou shalt repose, while o'er the waters calm  
The rowers speed thee to thy land and home, 360  
And whatsoe'er is dear—e'en though it be  
Beyond Eubœa, which our mariners  
Who once beheld it, what time they conveyed

The fair-haired Rhadamanthus to have sight  
Of Tityus, son of Gaia, say to be  
Farthest of human lands. There in one day  
Their voyage they achieved nor knew fatigue,  
And then they home returned ; so thou shalt know  
How passing swift my ships, how gallantly  
My young crews toss the salt foam from their oars." 370

Odysseus heard, and in his heart rejoiced ;  
He breathed a prayer, and thus he answer made ;

"Grant, Father Zeus, that what Alcinous  
Hath this day promised he may surely do ;  
So never may his fame on earth grow dim  
And so may I come to my native land."

Thus they held converse, but Areté bade  
Her handmaids spread a bed beneath the porch  
With purple blankets and with coverlets,  
And cloaks of shaggy wool laid over all. 380  
Then from the hall they went with torch in hand  
And when in haste they had laid out the bed,  
They stood beside Odysseus, and they said ;  
"Go sleep, O Stranger, for thy bed is made."  
And welcome seemed to him the thought of rest.  
So there on carved bed the patient Chief  
Slept 'neath the echoing porch ; meanwhile within  
In inmost chamber of the palace high  
Reposed Alcinous, and by his side  
His Queen and Wife prepared and shared his couch. 390





BOOK VIII

## SUMMARY OF BOOK VIII

ALCINOUS commands a ship to be prepared for the departure of Odysseus, and he bids him and the Phæacian chiefs to a banquet in the palace. There Demodocus, the blind minstrel, sings a song of the Trojan war, which affects Odysseus so deeply, that Alcinous, perceiving it, proposes some athletic games as a diversion.

Laodamas and Euryalus, sons of Alcinous, taunt Odysseus for taking no part in the games, whereat Odysseus, after a singularly eloquent reply, hurls a stone far beyond the limits reached by any Phæacian, and challenges all present to shoot with the bow or to throw the spear.

Alcinous on this interposes, and calls for a dance; and Demodocus sings a lay touching the loves of Ares and Aphrodite, which is followed by a dance and play with the ball by the Phæacian youths.

Then Alcinous bids his son Euryalus make amends to Odysseus for his rough speech, and Odysseus receives gifts from Euryalus and others present.

Nausicaa appears for a short time again in all her beauty, and exchanges courteous greetings with Odysseus; and Demodocus sings another lay on the capture of Troy by the wooden horse and the destruction of the city, which so affects Odysseus that Alcinous inquires of him his name and story.

## BOOK VIII

WHEN rosy Eos brightened in the sky,  
Arose from bed the stout Alcinous,  
Rose too Odysseus of the race of Zeus,  
The ravager of cities. Then the King  
Unto the place of Council led the way  
Where the Phæacians meet. 'Twas by the ships ;  
There side by side upon the polished stones  
They sat them down, whilst in the form and guise  
Of the King's herald through the city went  
Pallas Athené, planning a return 10  
For the stout-hearted Chief, and by each man  
She stood, and thus she spake ;

“ Come, noble Lords  
And Councillors of the Phæacian folk,  
Come, get ye to the meeting, there to hear  
News of the stranger who hath lately come  
Like an Immortal God in face and form

From far across the sea unto the halls  
Of wise Alcinous."

Thus with her words  
She stirred the heart and courage of each man ;  
And fast they gathered and the seats were filled. 20  
With wondering gaze on wise Laertes' son  
Each eye was bent, for o'er his head and neck  
Athené shed such comely grace, that he  
Might seem of mightier limb and statelier form,  
And get him honour and great reverence  
From the Phæacians, and achieve the toil,  
Wherewith they purposed to try his strength.  
Now when they were together come, the King  
Arose and spake ;

" Hear Lords and Councillors,  
Whilst I declare the purpose of my soul. 30  
This stranger here unto my house hath come,  
I know not who he is nor where his home,  
From East or West—this only that he craves  
A sure safe-conduct to his native land.  
So let us swiftly send him on his way,  
As is our wont, for none who seeks these halls  
Has cause to tarry long or shed a tear  
Over enforced delay. Then draw we down  
To the salt sea a new and gallant ship,  
And man her with the choicest of our crews, 40  
Some two and fifty youths ; then let them lash

Their oars unto the thwarts, and to the shore  
Return and hasten to my house where we  
Will make good cheer. I will provide for all.  
Such charge I give our youth ; the sceptred Kings  
I bid unto my house, that they with me  
May entertain this stranger in our halls.  
Let none say nay ; and bid the godlike bard  
Demodocus attend, to whom the God  
Hath given the gift of precious minstrelsy, 50  
Whene'er his spirit moveth him to sing."

He spake and led the way, but in his train  
Followed the sceptered chiefs ; the herald went  
To seek the minstrel, and the chosen youths  
Went two and fifty at their Lord's command  
Down to the barren sea. Into the deep  
They launched the ship, made ready mast and sails,  
Fitted the oars unto the leathern thongs  
Each in its place, and spread the canvas white.  
So a short space from shore they moored their bark, 60  
And to the halls of wise Alcinous  
They went their way. Then were the porch and courts  
And chambers filled with the quick-gathering crowd  
Of old and young, for whom Alcinous  
Did sacrifice twelve sheep, eight white-tusked boars,  
Two heavy-footed oxen. These they flayed  
And made them ready for the welcome feast.  
And now drew near the herald, by the hand

Leading the gracious minstrel. Him the Muse  
Loved greatly, but to him both good and ill 70  
Had granted ; for of sight she robbed his eyes,  
But with sweet song she blessed him. So for him  
Against a lofty pillar, in the midst  
Of the assembled guests, Pontonous  
Did place a silver-studded chair of state ;  
And on a peg above his head he hung  
The sounding lyre, guiding the blind man's hands  
To where it was, whilst by his side was set  
A table fair, with food and wine-cup graced,  
To drink as he might list. Then all the guests 80  
Stretched forth their hands to eat ; but when the feast  
Was o'er and they had ate and drunk their fill,  
Then by the Muse the minstrel's mind was moved  
To sing the deeds of heroes, and that lay  
Whereof the fame had reached the heights of Heaven,  
How once Odysseus and great Peleus' son  
Strove with each other in resentful speech  
At a high feast in honour of the Gods,  
And Agamemnon, King of men, rejoiced  
Within his secret soul to see the strife 90  
Of the Achæan Chiefs ; for so erewhile  
When he in sacred Pytho sought the God,  
And crossed the stony threshold of the shrine,  
Had Phœbus warned him ; for 'twas even then  
That the first surge of woe was rolling in



On Greek and Trojan by the will of Zeus.

So sang the famous bard, but o'er his head  
Odysseus drew his broad and purple cloak  
With sturdy grasp and veiled his comely face.  
For he had shame that stranger eye should mark 100  
The falling tears ; yet ever and anon  
When in his lay the minstrel paused, the Chief  
Drying the tears drew from his face his cloak,  
And raised the two-cupped bowl and pledged the Gods.  
But when the bard began afresh the song,  
And the Phæacians cheered him to his task  
Delighting in the strain, again his cloak  
Odysseus wrapped around his face and wept,  
All unperceived—alone Alcinous  
Who sat beside him, marked the silent tear 110  
And heard his heavy groans ; straightway he turned  
To the Phæacian Captains and thus spake ;

“Hear Lords and Councillors, now that our souls  
Are satiate with the banquet and the song,  
Which is fit consort to the goodly feast ;  
Forth let us go and try each manly sport,  
That this our guest may tell his friends at home,  
How far beyond compare with other men  
Our skill to box, to wrestle, leap, or run.”

He spake, and led the way ; they followed close. 120  
Then on the peg the herald hung the lyre,  
And by the hand led forth Demodocus

Into the way, where the Phæacian chiefs  
Were thronging to the games. So one and all  
Poured forth the mighty concourse ; and the youths,  
Many and good, stood up to try their chance.  
There was Acroneus and Ocealus,  
There was Elatreus, Nauteus, Prymneus too,  
Eretmeus, Ponteus, and Anchialus,  
Proreus and Thoon, Anabesineus, 130  
And Polynéus' son Amphialus,  
Grandson of Tecton, and Euryalus,  
A match for murderous Ares ; there too was  
The son of Naubolus, in face and form  
Noblest of all Phæacians, save alone  
Laodamas the peerless ; for three sons  
Alcinous begat—Laodamas,  
Halius, and Clytonéus, like a God.  
These all on foot made trial in the race,  
And from the goal in rapid rout they flew, 140  
Shrouding the plain in dust. Swiftest of all  
Was peerless Clytonéus ; by the length  
Of one new furrow which the mules may plough  
He passed ahead and reached th' expectant crowd.  
Next in the wrestling's rugged sport they vied,  
Wherein the winner was Euryalus.  
Amphialus in leaping then was first,  
Elatreus with the quoit, Laodamas  
The King's fair son in boxing bore the prize.

When they had ta'en their pleasure in their sports, 150  
Laodamas thus spake ;

“Come, friends, let's prove  
What knowledge of our games this stranger hath.  
Shapely methinks he is, and great his strength  
Of thigh and limb, of hands and massive neck ;  
Nor lacks he youth withal ; hardship alone  
Hath bent and bowed him ; nor is there device  
So potent to destroy a strong man's strength  
As is the stormy sea.”

Straightway to him  
Euryalus replied ;

“Well hast thou said ;  
Go bear the challenge to our stranger guest.” 160

To him Alcinous' stout son gave ear ;  
Into the midst he stepped, and thus he spake ;

“Come, stranger Father, trial make with us  
In these our games, if, as I deem thou hast,  
Knowledge thereof ; for whilst a man hath breath  
There is no greater honour to be won  
Than by the prowess of his hands and feet.  
Come then, dismiss all care and prove thy strength,  
Nor shall thy journey be long while delayed ;  
Thy ship is riding on the sea, thy crew 170  
Are ready to be gone.”

To him replied  
The sage Odysseus ;

“Why Laodamas  
Dost mock me thus? my thoughts are turned to grief,  
Not sport; for I have suffered much and long,  
And I am here a suppliant to crave  
In this Assembly from your King and folk  
Dismissal to my home.”

He spake, but him  
With bitter taunt answered Euryalus;

“Truly O stranger we may see that thou  
Art all unversed in manly game and sport; 180  
Thou seemest one who, faring to and fro  
In full-oared bark, captain of merchantmen,  
Hast all thy soul in pelf and huckstering gains.”

Odysseus frowned, and then in answer spake;  
“Discourteous stranger, and unmannerly,  
The Gods give not their gracious gifts of wit,  
Stature, or eloquence to all alike.  
One is in form contemptible and mean,  
Yet do the Gods crown him with winning speech,  
And men are gladdened at the sight of him; 190  
And he with words unerring but most sweet  
And modest speaks unto th’ assembled folk,  
And as he passes through the city, they  
Gaze on him as a God. There is again  
One who in face may match th’ Immortal Gods,  
But on whose speech no crown of beauty rests.  
And such art thou. Surely no God himself

Could fashion thee more fairly, but thy mind  
Is base and grovelling. Yet thy shameless tongue  
Has stirred my spirit, for I too had once 200  
Skill in those games whereof thou makest boast,  
And while I trusted in my youth and strength  
Might count me 'mid the first ; but toil and grief  
And wars and stormy seas have bowed me down.  
Yet thus, e'en thus, I will essay the games,  
For thy insulting taunt hath stirred my wrath."

. He spake, and all enveloped in his robe  
Upsprang, and grasping a more massy stone  
Than e'er was wielded in Phæacian sport,  
He whirled and hurled it from his mighty hand. 210  
Hurtled in air the stone, and on the ground  
Crouched the Phæacian mariners for fear  
Beneath the rushing mass, so swift it flew  
Beyond th' appointed bounds. In human form  
Athené marked the spot, and on him called ;

"A blind man, stranger, might discern that throw,  
Not lost amid the throng of rival casts,  
But far beyond them all. Wherefore take heart  
Of this encounter ; no Phæacian throw  
Shall match or pass it."

Thus the Goddess spake, 220  
And glad Odysseus was to see a friend  
Upon the field ; so with a lighter heart  
He spake to the Phæacians ;

“Match me that,  
If so ye may, young men, and ye shall see  
Another such, and yet a farther cast.  
And he who courage hath and heart for such,  
Let him come here and try his strength with me,  
Boxing or wrestling, foot-race, as ye will ;  
For you have moved my wrath, and I will meet  
All of you save Laodamas, my host. 230  
For who but fool or knave would join in strife  
With friendly host and in a foreign land ?  
'Twere ruin to himself. None else I bar  
And none despise, but face to face I wish  
To know and prove them. In all manly sports  
I have not borne me ill ; well have I known  
To handle the smooth bow, and be the first  
To strike my man amid the hostile throng,  
Though round me many a comrade stood and drew  
Upon our enemies. On Trojan soil, 240  
And 'mid the archers of th' Achæan host,  
Alone could Philoctetes with the bow  
Surpass me ; but of other mortal men  
I count myself the best ; yet with the men  
Of olden time I vie not—Heracles,  
Or the Æchalian Eurytus, who strove  
With the Immortal Gods in archery.  
Therefore died Eurytus before his day,  
Nor came old age upon him in his home,



For that Apollo slew him in his wrath, 250  
For daring to contend in archer's skill.  
And I can hurl the spear as other men  
Can shoot the arrow ; only do I fear  
Lest some Phæacian, by his speed of foot,  
Outrun me, for the seas tempestuous  
And scanty food have sorely tried my strength."

He said, and all were hushed in silence there.  
Alone Alcinous in answer spake ;

"Stranger, thy words have no ungracious sound,  
Fain wouldst thou show the prowess that is thine, 260  
And wrathful art thou that yon man should dare  
Within the listed field to vent his taunts—  
The idle babble of a witless wight—  
Against thy manhood. Come, then, list my words ;  
So when once more thou featest in thy halls  
With wife and children, thou shalt call to mind  
Our prowess, and to other heroes tell  
What deeds by favour of Almighty Zeus,  
We and our fathers have achieved. Know then  
That nor in boxing nor in wrestling match 270  
We claim pre-eminence, but in the race,  
And aboard ship we hold ourselves the first ;  
And dear to us are banquet, lute, and dance,  
And change of raiment and the bath and bed.  
So then, let those amongst us who best know  
And love the dance, make sport for this our guest,

That when he comes again to home and friends  
He may proclaim our high pre-eminence  
On sea, in speed of foot, and dance and song.  
Then let one go, and to Demodocus 280  
Bring the sweet lyre which hangeth in our halls."

So spake Alcinous. The Herald went  
To fetch the lyre from out the royal halls ;  
But then uprose nine judges who had charge  
To rule the song, by public voice elect ;  
And they made smooth and broad the place of dance.  
Next came the herald bearing the shrill lute  
Unto the bard who stepped into the ring,  
And round him, in the flush and flower of youth,  
Stood the young dancers, and with feet that seemed 290  
To twinkle as they moved, beat the hard ground.  
Odysseus gazed and marvelled at the sight.

Now 'gan the bard in lofty strain to hymn  
The loves of Ares and the fair-crowned Queen ;  
How at the first in secret and within  
Hephœstos' halls they interchanged their love,  
And he gave many gifts and did foul wrong  
To King Hephœstos ; yet ere long there came  
One who had witnessed their unholy love,  
King Helios, and told the tale of shame. 300  
But when Hephœstos heard it he arose,  
And darkly brooding o'er some shrewd device  
Went to his forge and on the stithy set

A mighty anvil, whereupon he wrought  
Chains that might nor be loosened nor be broke,  
Whence none who once was captive could escape.  
So when the snare was made, which in his wrath  
'Gainst Ares he had wrought, he went his way  
Unto the chamber where the marriage bed  
Was spread; and round the posts and from the beams <sup>310</sup>  
He hung the snare, subtle as spider's web,  
And so invisible the Gods themselves  
Might not discern it, with such craft 'twas wrought.  
But when the toils around the couch were spread,  
He feigned to go to Lemnos' massy keep,  
The land he loves the best. Ares, meanwhile,  
Lord of the golden rein kept no blind watch;  
He saw the mighty Craftsman go from home,  
And to Hephæstos' house he took his way,  
Burning with love for Cytherea. She <sup>320</sup>  
Had newly come from her most potent sire,  
The son of Cronos, and she sat her down.  
But he came in and clasped her hand and said;

“Come, Sweetheart, let us take our fill of love  
While still Hephæstos is away from home;  
For he, methinks, hath gone to Lemnos' Isle,  
Unto the Sintians of outlandish speech.”

He spake, and she consented to his will,  
And on the bed they laid them down to sleep.  
But round them closed Hephæstos' cunning toils, <sup>330</sup>



And the Gods gathered to the brazen house.  
There was Poseidon, the earth-shaking Lord ;  
There Hermes, God of help ; Apollo too,  
Far-shooting king ; but in their homes for shame 360  
Tarried the Goddesses. Thus in the porch  
Stood all the Gods, the givers of good things,  
And laughed, with laughter all unquenchable,  
As they beheld Hephæstos' cunning snare ;  
And thus did one unto another say ;

“Small profit in ill deeds ! The slow one beats  
The swift one in the race ; even as now  
Slow-paced and lame Hephæstos by his craft  
Hath taken Ares, swiftest of the Gods—  
So let him pay th' adulterer's penalty.” 370

So spake they, but Apollo, son of Zeus,  
Said unto Hermes ;

“O thou Messenger  
And giver of good things, wouldst thou consent  
To sleep with Aphrodité, though in bonds ?”  
To whom the Heav'nly messenger replied ;

“Would that e'en so it were, Apollo King,  
And I were bound by thrice as many bonds,  
And all ye Gods and Goddesses stood by,  
So that with Aphrodité I might sleep.”

He spake, and laughter rose among the Gods ; 380  
Only Poseidon laughed not, but he prayed  
Hephæstos to make loose the chains that bound

Ares, and thus he said ;

“ Loose him, and I  
Will be his surety that he pay the due  
And fitting penalty before the Gods.”

To whom the strong-armed Craftsman answer made ;  
“ Ask not this boon, Poseidon ; worthless are  
The pledges of the worthless. How could I  
Bind thee, in presence of th’ Immortal Gods,  
In place of Ares if he should escape 390  
His debt and bonds together ?”

But to him  
Poseidon, the earth-shaking God, replied ;  
“ Nay, but if Ares should escape and leave  
His debt unpaid, I will make good the bond.”

To him the strong-armed Craftsman answer made ;  
“ Since so it is, I may not say thee nay ;”  
And with these words Hephoëstos slacked the chain,  
And the two lovers, loosened from their bonds,  
Sprang forth—the God to Thrace pursued his way,  
And laughter-loving Aphrodité sped 400  
To Cyprian Paphos, where her sacred grove  
Is situate and where her altar smokes.  
There did the Graces bathe their Queen, and pour  
O’er her th’ ambrosial oil, the chrism of Gods,  
And clad her in her raiment wondrous fair.

So sang the bard. Odysseus heard and joyed,  
And with him all the far-famed mariners



Of the Phæacian people ; but the King  
Bade Halius and Laodamas alone  
Perform the dance, since none might vie with them. 410

Forthwith the fair and purple ball they took,  
Which cunning Polybus had wrought for them,  
And bending backwards one would cast it high  
Towards the shadowy clouds, his fellow then  
In quick succession springing from the earth  
Would catch it in mid-air. Now when the twain  
Had made an end of this their play, they wove  
The dance with rapid interchange of hands  
And beat of foot upon the fertile ground ;  
And all the youth crowding around the ring 420  
Kept time and measure as they roared applause.  
Then spake Odysseus ;

“ Noble King and Lords,  
It was thy boast thy dancers were the best,  
And now thy words come true. Lo, as I gaze,  
Great wonder fills my soul.”

Odysseus spake,  
And the stout King Alcinous was glad,  
And to his mariners he straightway spake ;  
“ Hear me, Phæacian Councillors and Lords ;  
Wisely methinks the stranger bears himself ;  
So let us offer him a stranger’s gift 430  
As it beseems us. Twelve illustrious Kings  
With me, the thirteenth, o’er our folk bear sway :

Then let each give him a new-washen cloak,  
A tunic and a talent of fine gold,  
And we will bear them straight unto our guest,  
That he may go rejoicing to the feast.  
Let too Euryalus with word and gift  
Make compensation for ungracious speech."

He said, and all consented to his words.  
So each sent forth a herald for his gift ; 440  
And thus Euryalus ;

"O noble King  
Here at thy bidding I make recompense  
Unto our guest, and offer him this sword.  
'Tis all of bronze with hilt of silver wrought,  
In sheath of newest ivory enclosed,  
A present of great price."

So saying, he  
Placed in Odysseus' hands the precious blade,  
And swift addressed him ;

"Stranger Father hail,  
And if ungentle word hath crossed my lips,  
May the wild storm-blasts bear it far away. 450  
But may the Gods grant thee to see again  
Thy wife and home, since far away from friend,  
Long time thou sufferest the weight of woe."

To him the sage Odysseus made reply ;  
"And hail thou too my friend ; all good be thine,  
And may'st thou never know regret or care

For the good gift thy courteous speech has graced."

Odysseus spake, and o'er his shoulders cast  
The silver-mounted blade. Then sank the sun,  
And the choice gifts before him were displayed. 460  
But to the palace of Alcinous  
The heralds bore them, and the royal youths  
Before their lady Mother laid them down.  
Alcinous led the way ; they followed close  
And sat them down on lofty chairs of state,  
And to his spouse Areté thus he spake ;

"Come, Lady Wife, bring here the choicest chest  
And fairest that thou hast ; and in it place  
A new-washed cloak and tunic, and make fire  
And heat the brazen cauldron, that our guest 470  
May wash and gaze on the array of gifts  
Borne here by our Phæacians, and take joy  
In feast and minstrelsy ; and I myself  
Will offer to him this fair golden cup,  
That all his days in memory of me  
He may therewith at home libation make  
To Zeus and all the Company of Heaven."

Then did Areté bid her handmaids set  
A mighty cauldron on the blazing fire ;  
And they made ready for the bath, and poured 480  
Therein the water, and heaped up the wood.  
But round the bellying cauldron swept the flame  
And warmed the water. Then the glorious chest

Forth from the storeroom did Areté bring,  
And placed within it for her stranger guest  
Choice gifts which the Phæacian chiefs had giv'n,  
Raiment and gold, and from herself a cloak  
And beauteous tunic, while she swiftly spake ;

“See to the lid and make thou fast the knot,  
Lest when thou slumb’rest softly on board ship 490  
Some plunderer spoil thee on thy way.”

She said,

And the stout chief gave ear unto her words,  
Made the lid fast and drew the cunning knot  
Which Circe taught him. Straightway the house-dame  
Bade him go bathe, and to the bath he went,  
And joyed to see it, for 'twas long since he  
Had been so tended—never since the day  
He left the dwelling of the fair-tressed nymph,  
Where he had constant tendance as a God.  
Now when the handmaids had fulfilled their tasks 500  
With bath and oil, a tunic and fair cloak  
They cast upon him, and from out the bath  
He stepped, and sought the chieftains at the feast.  
But at the doorway stood Nausicaa  
Rich in the beauty of th' Immortal Gods,  
And as she looked upon the goodly chief  
She marvelled, and she spake these winged words ;  
“Stranger, farewell, and when thou comest home,  
Remember her who ransomed thee from death.”

To her the sage Odysseus made reply ; 510

“ Daughter of stout Alcinous, may Zeus,  
Here’s loud-thundering Lord, grant me to see  
The day of my return ; then will I pay,  
All my days long, Maiden, my vows to thee,  
As to a God, for thou hast saved my life.”

He spake, and sat him down beside the King,  
And meat and wine went round the board. Thereon  
Drew near the herald, leading the loved bard,  
Honoured of men, Demodocus, and him  
Beside a lofty column he made sit 520  
Amidst the banqueters. Then the wise Chief  
Cut from the chine of a white-tusked boar  
A goodly morsel—yet did more remain  
In the rich fat imbedded—and he gave  
Unto the herald with these gracious words ;

“ Take and present this meat unto the bard,  
And bid him hail from me despite my grief,  
For among men who dwell upon the earth  
The bard hath ever reverence and praise,  
For that the Muse hath taught him her sweet strains, 530  
And loves the race of minstrels.”

So he spake,  
And to Demodocus the herald bore  
The goodly mess, and much the bard rejoiced.  
Then on the meats before them spread the guests  
Stretched forth their hands. But when the feast was o’er

Unto Demodocus Odysseus spake ;

“Thee above mortal men I honour most,  
Whether Apollo or the Heaven-born Muse  
Taught thee the strain, so truly dost thou sing  
The fortunes of the Greeks, what deeds they wrought, 540  
What toils they suffered, and what griefs they bore,  
As though thyself hadst seen the very feats,  
Or heard the tale from one who witnessed them.  
Come, then, take up the strain, illustrious bard,  
And sing the story of the wooden steed  
Wrought by Epeius with Athené’s aid—  
That shrewd device which great Odysseus brought  
Into the citadel, full of armed men,  
The ravagers of Troy ; and, if that tale  
Thou tell’st aright, then to the sons of men 550  
I’ll noise abroad how of his wondrous grace  
The God hath granted thee the gift of song.”

He spake, and by the Heavenly impulse stirred  
The bard poured forth his song and told the tale  
How on a day the Argive host set sail  
And fired their tents ; but in the hollow horse  
E’en in Troy’s market-place and citadel,  
Where Trojan hands had placed it, sat ensconced,  
The band that gathered to Odysseus’ call.  
Meanwhile the Trojan people held debate, 560  
Whether to pierce with steel the hollow horse,  
Or from the heights to cast it headlong down,



Or to enshrine it as an offering  
Unto the Gods. And this last was their choice,  
For 'twas their doom to perish, when their walls  
Had closed upon the wooden horse, wherein  
The bravest of the Argives ambushed lay,  
Bearers of death and bloodshed to their foes.  
He sang how, pouring from their hollow lair,  
The sons of the Achæans sacked the town. 570  
And each man's deeds he told ; further he sang  
How to the palace of Deiphobus,  
With Menelaus like the God of War,  
Odysseus made and won his way with feat  
Of desperate daring through the thickest fight  
By favour of Athené." .

Thus the bard ;

But as he sang Odysseus' heart waxed faint,  
And o'er his cheeks flowed down the silent tears.  
So wails a wife o'er her fall'n hero, who  
In sight of country and his countrymen 580  
Dies in defence of children and of home ;  
So as she sees him drawing his last breath  
She casts her arms around him and laments,  
Whilst the stern foemen coming up behind  
Smite her on back and shoulders with their spears,  
And lead her into bondage harsh and hard.  
As thus her tears of saddest sorrow flow,  
So did Odysseus weep ; yet of those guests

None save Alcinous, who sat beside,  
Marked the outpouring of his silent grief. 590  
He saw the tears, he heard the heavy sigh,  
And to his Captains presently he spake ;  
    “ Hearken, my Lords and Chieftains, to my word,  
And let the Minstrel cease awhile his song,  
For there are those to whom his strain to-day  
Doth bring annoy. Since this our feast began  
And the bard rose to sing, our stranger guest  
Hath never ceased to grieve, but deepest woe  
Hath compassed him about ; wherefore, I pray,  
Let the song end, and guest and host alike 600  
Make merry as is fitting, for methinks  
’Twas for our honoured friend we spread this board  
And gave an escort and these loving gifts ;  
For he whose mind hath aught of reason’s light  
Doth know this well, that suppliant and guest  
Stand in a brother’s room ; and, stranger, thou,  
Veil not of crafty purpose thy reply  
Unto my questioning, but as is meet  
Tell me the name, whate’er it be, whereby  
Thy father, mother, they of thine own town 610  
And of thy country call thee ; for be sure  
There liveth not the man who hath no name  
Whether of good or ill repute he be.  
For every child when he first sees the light  
Gets him a name from those who gave him birth.

So tell thy country and thy race and town,  
That our good ships may know where thou would'st go;  
For all unlike the ships of other men,  
Nor helm nor steersman have our country's barks  
But of themselves they know the thoughts of men ; 620  
They know each city and the fertile fields  
Of foreign lands, and wrapped in gloom and mist  
O'er the broad ocean gulfs they hold their course  
Fearless of loss and shipwreck. So my sire  
Nausithous, I know, was wont to tell  
Of the fierce wrath which King Poseidon bore  
Unto our race, for that across the sea  
They guided men in safety ; and he said  
The day should come when on the misty main  
The God should shatter some Phæacian bark 630  
Returning from her convoy, and should bring  
Some vast o'ershadowing mountain on the town.  
So the old man was wont to speak ; and so  
The God may do or leave undone the doom,  
As in his wisdom he may deem aright.  
But come now, tell us truly whence thou art,  
Unto what lands thy wandering steps have gone,  
What were the men, the peopled towns, and they  
Who dwell therein, whether of rugged mood,  
Or just, God-fearing, and to strangers kind ? 640  
And tell us why thy tears and sighs broke forth  
As oft as thou didst hear the tale of Troy

And of the Argive host? Yet sure the Gods  
Did shape the doom and **weave** the web of death,  
That after ages **might** rehearse the lay.  
Or **hast** thou trusty kinsmen who in fight  
Fell 'neath the walls of Troy? or son-in-law,  
Or father of thy wife? for such methinks  
Stand next to those of a man's blood and race?  
Or was it comrade trusty and beloved 650  
Who, if he bear an understanding mind,  
Is not one whit behind a brother's self?"

## BOOK IX

## SUMMARY OF BOOK IX

ODYSSEUS begins the tale of his wanderings from the time when he sailed from Troy, and declares himself to be Odysseus, son of Laertes, and Prince of Ithaca.

He tells how with his companions he on his way home took and sacked the city of the Ciconians, and how, when feasting after their victory, they were attacked and driven thence with loss.

Thence in rounding Cape Malea they were driven out of their course, and after nine days' sail they came to the land of the Lotos-eaters, where he who eats the lotos forgets home and friends. From there they made their way to the Cyclops' country, and after anchoring in a neighbouring island inhabited only by the Nymphs and the wild goats, Odysseus with one ship's company visited the Cyclops' Cave. The Cyclops, a monstrous giant, was absent with his flocks in the mountains, but they awaited his return, and on his arrival they told their tale, and implored his hospitality. But the monster seized and ate two of the crew, and after imprisoning the rest in his cave, on the following day he repeated his savage meal.

Odysseus relates how he gave him wine, and whilst the Cyclops was sleeping under the effects of his horrible orgy, he blinded him with a red-hot stake ; and how he then saved himself and his companions by a mixture of craft and courage, regaining his ships and putting to sea. He could not, however, resist the temptation of taunting the blind Cyclops, who had come down to the sea-shore, which so exasperated the savage that he tore off a fragment of the cliff and hurled it in the direction of the ship, nearly sinking it. Odysseus tells how he then declared his real name, and how the Cyclops recognised it in consequence of an ancient prophecy, and thereupon prayed aloud to Poseidon, his father, to curse Odysseus, which curse was later fulfilled. Odysseus further tells how he retired to the island where he had left his companions, and with them pursued his voyage.



## BOOK IX

To him the wise Odysseus made reply ;  
“ Alcinous, noble Prince, sweet is the song  
Of minstrel such as this, whose voice may vie  
With the Immortal Gods ; nor is there joy  
Greater than when a people make good cheer,  
And each in order ranged adown the hall  
They feast and listen to the minstrel’s song,  
Whilst the wide board groans with the bread and meat,  
And the cup-bearer bears and pours the wine  
From beaker into goblet. I do hold  
There is no fairer custom among men.  
But since thy mind is set to hear my woes,  
Though in the telling I must grieve afresh,  
Where shall I make beginning, and where end ?  
For many sorrows have th’ Immortal Gods  
Upon me laid. Wherefore ye first shall hear  
My name, that when this day of wrath is past,

E'en though far separate in distant lands  
We yet may keep alive the memory  
Of friendship interchanged 'twixt host and guest. 20  
I am ODYSSEUS, great Laertes' son,  
Famed among men and e'en in Heaven's high Court  
For crafty wile and purpose ; and my home  
Is Ithaca, which seamen sight from far ;  
For in the midst rise clear the leafy heights  
Of Neritus. Hard by lies many an isle—  
Dulichium, Samé, and the waving woods  
That shade Zacynthus. To the East they look,  
Tow'rds the first light of day ; but Ithaca  
Low-lying on the sea furthest of all 30  
Turns to the shadowy West. Rocky and stern,  
And yet a kindly nurse of men is she ;  
Nor know I sweeter sight to mortal eyes  
Than a man's native land. Me for awhile  
Divine Calypso, when she sought my love,  
Constrained within her hollow grot to stay ;  
Me Circe too, what time she sought my love  
Within the bowers of th' Æœan Isle,  
Held me a captive by her treacherous wiles ;  
Yet could they not my steadfast mind subdue ; 40  
For sweet are home and parents. List thou then  
The tale of my sad wanderings, Heaven-ordained.

As from the siege I steered my homeward course,  
The wind that bore me from the shores of Troy

Brought me to Ismarus and to the land  
Of the Ciconians. There we stayed and sacked  
Their town ; their men we slew, but of their wives  
And the rich spoil I made division fair,  
That none should empty-handed come away.  
Then gave I counsel, when the deed was done, 50  
To fly the country ; but they hearkened not  
Unto my voice, poor fools ! They swilled the wine,  
And slew the hornéd oxen on the shore,  
Till at the last 'twas bruited through the land  
What we had done, and swift the tribesmen came  
In swarms, well skilled on foot or horse to fight ;  
And like the leaves and flowers of summer-tide,  
Innumerable they trooped at break of day.  
Then fell the wrath of Zeus upon our ranks  
Doomed to great woe by baleful destiny, 60  
While by the ships our foemen stood and waged  
A stubborn war, casting their brazen spears.

So passed the morn, and as the day wore on  
We bore the brunt of their o'erwhelming hosts ;  
But when the sun went down, about the time  
When herdsmen loose the oxen from the plough,  
The foemen brake our line. That day each crew  
Six mailéd warriors lost ; and we, the rest,  
Barely escaped with life from death and doom.

Thence sailed we on, rejoicing to be free, 70  
Yet sad at heart for the dear friends we lost ;

And ne'er a galley left that shore till thrice  
Upon our hapless comrades we had called,  
Whom the Ciconians slew upon the land.

Then did cloud-gathering Zeus bring on our ships  
With wrack and storm the North-Wind, and made dark  
Both Earth and Heaven. Night fell upon the main ;  
And we drave headlong ; but the tattered sails  
We stowed within the hold, and fearing death  
We plied our oars and rowed towards the land. 80  
So for two livelong days and nights we toiled,  
In grief and labour eating out our souls,  
But when the fair-haired morn the third day brought,  
We stepped the masts and hoisted the white sails,  
And to the favouring breeze and steersman gave  
The guidance of our ships. And then in sooth  
I might have seen my native land again,  
But as we rounded the Malean Cape,  
The swirling tide and north wind bore me far  
Out of my course beyond Cythera's isle. 90

Thence for nine days upon the teeming deep  
The fierce winds drove us, till upon the tenth  
Unto the Lotos-eater's land we came.  
Ashore we went and water drew and spread  
Our meal beside the ship ; but when our feast  
Was o'er, I sent my comrades forth to spy  
What men they were the dwellers of this land.  
So two I chose and to them joined a third,

A herald ; who went forth and with the folk  
Full converse held. Gentle in sooth they were, 100  
Nor treason planned nor murder 'gainst our friends,  
But gave the lotos-flower and bade them taste.  
Now whosoe'er of them ate of that fruit,  
He cared not to return but willed for aye  
Among the Lotos-eaters there to stay,  
Eating the lotos without thought of home.  
So them sore weeping I constrained on board,  
And bound beneath the thwarts ; then bade the rest  
Enter the ships, lest they should taste that fruit  
And be forgetful of return to home. 110  
Then straight on board they went and sat them down  
And with their oars smote on the hoary sea.

So on we sailed grieving at heart, and came  
Unto the Cyclops' land—a lawless race  
And headstrong ; they nor sow nor till,  
But trust their harvests to th' Immortal Gods.  
The corn the barley and the clustering grape  
Grow of their own sweet will ; Heaven's kindly rain  
Gives them their increase. They know not of law  
Or ancient usage, nor grave council hold 120  
In parley for the State ; but in deep caves  
They dwell upon the hill tops, and they rule  
Their households, nor does each of other reck.

There is an island at the harbour's mouth—  
Nor far nor near the Cyclops' land it lies—

A fruitful woody isle ; within its bounds  
The countless herds of wild goats have their haunt ;  
No step of man affrights them, never comes  
The huntsman patient of fatigue by wood  
And mountain crag. So by the plough untouched, 130  
Unpastured by the flocks, that island hath  
No dwellers save the wild and bleating goat.  
Thither nor ships with crimson prow resort,  
Nor shipwrights dwell who know to build the barks,  
Which bear men o'er the sea to distant towns,  
And fill the measure of their fond desires.  
All such the Cyclops' land hath not, nor those,  
Who might ordain laws and wise polity.  
Yet not unkindly is that island's soil,  
And in due season nought would it deny. 140  
The soft moist meadows slope to the sea marge,  
The vine knows no decay, the land lies smooth  
And level to the ploughshare—rich methinks  
Might be the harvest of that bounteous glebe.  
Upon the shore lies a fair haven, where  
There is no need of cable to the strand,  
No need of anchor or of mooring rope ;  
But on the beach the sailor draws his bark,  
And bides his time till fancy and the breeze  
Invite his going. At that harbour's head 150  
A fountain issuing from a rocky cell  
Pours down its shining waters, and around



Stand the tall poplars. So to land we came,  
And sure some God guided our vessel's course,  
For the dark night showed nought, and heavy lay  
The mist upon our galleys, and the moon  
Shrouded in clouds refused her light from heaven.  
Nor did we sight the isle or see the waves  
Breaking upon the shore until our barks  
Had touched the strand; then straight we stepped ashore, 160  
Lowered our sails, and drawing up our ships  
Slumbered awhile and waited for the day.

Now when the rosy-fingered Dawn arose,  
We roamed throughout the island, wondering much  
At all we saw; and there the gracious Nymphs,  
Daughters of Zeus, to make my comrades cheer,  
Roused the wild goats from out their mountain lairs.  
Then in three bands arrayed with bended bow  
And barbed spear we to the chase went forth;  
Nor stinted was the game which Heaven vouchsafed. 170  
Twelve ships sailed with me; to each crew nine goats,  
And ten to me of that day's sport were given.  
So all the day until the sun went down,  
We sat and feasted on the meat and wine;  
For not as yet was spent the ample store  
Which from the sack of the Ciconian town  
We placed on shipboard; and we looked across  
The narrow strait unto the Cyclops' land,  
And saw the smoke of fires, and heard the sound

Of voices and the bleating of the flocks. 180

But when the sun went down and darkness fell,  
We laid us down and slept upon the shore.

When rosy Eos brightened in the sky,  
I called my friends to council and thus spake ;

‘ Abide ye here, my comrades true, while I  
With my own bark and shipmates go awhile  
And try what are the dwellers of this land,  
Whether unrighteous, violent, and fierce,  
Or gentle-minded and God-fearing men.’

I spake, and with my shipmates went aboard, 190  
And bade them loose our moorings—forthwith they,  
Each sitting in his place, smote with their oars  
Upon the hoary main. Now when we came  
Unto the neighbouring strand, we might descry  
On the sea verge a laurel-shrouded cave,  
A lofty space wherein vast flocks of sheep  
And goats did take their rest, for round about  
Was built a lofty court of massy stone,  
Fenced with tall pine-trees and the leafy oak.  
There dwelt a man of monster shape and size, 200  
And all alone he shepherded his flocks,  
Nor mingled with his kind, in solitude  
Brooding o’er deeds of lawlessness and wrong.  
Of wondrous bulk he was ; scant semblance his  
To man that lives by bread ; he rather seemed  
Like to some wooded crag on mountain-tops

Apart and solitary. Then I bade  
My trusty shipmates stay beside our bark  
And keep good guard, whilst I with twelve picked men  
Made trial of the land. With me I took 210  
A goatskin filled with that dark wine and sweet  
Which Maro, Phœbus' priest, Euanthes' son,  
Who dwelt at Ismarus, gave me when we  
Spared him and wife and child, what time we sacked  
His native town. Within the woody grove  
Of Phœbus, king Apollo, was his home,  
And we revered his office. So he gave  
Rich gifts—seven talents of fine gold, a cup  
All wrought in silver, and wine pure and sweet  
Stored in twelve ample jars, drink for the Gods. 220  
And none within his house, or maid or slave,  
Knew aught thereof save he, his wife, and one  
Right trusty dame who drew it. Such the strength  
Of that sweet ruddy wine that he who drank  
Poured twenty parts of water to one cup ;  
And so divine and fragrant was the smell  
That none might stand aloof. With this I filled  
A mighty skin, and in my wallet placed  
A store of food, for much my constant mind  
Presaged that I ere long a man should meet 230  
Clothed with vast strength and savage lawlessness.

So to the cave we came. He was not there,  
But in the pastures shepherded his flocks.

There we surveyed the wonders of his den ;  
The wicker shelves were laden with rich cheese,  
The pens were crowded with the sheep and goats  
Folded apart, the firstlings of the flock,  
And those in spring, and those in summer born ;  
While all around were troughs and milking-pails  
Full, and well-wrought, and brimming o'er with whey. 240  
Then did my comrades pray me to begone  
With cheese and goats and sheep, stow them aboard,  
And sail o'er the salt sea ; but I would not—  
Woe worth my fancy—for I craved to look  
Upon the monster, and to know what pledge  
Of hospitable purpose he would give.  
We knew not how unlovely was the guise  
And fashion of his coming ! So a fire  
We kindled and made sacrifice, and took  
And ate his cheeses, and we sat us down 250  
And waited for him. Then at last he came  
From shepherding his flocks, and in his arms  
A mighty burden of dry wood he bore  
Against the evening meal, and cast it down  
With awful din upon the cavern's floor,  
And we in fear fled to the inmost nook  
To hide us from him. Next within the cave  
The milky mothers of the herd he drove,  
But left outside within the deep court's pale  
The rams and he-goats ; then a mass of rock, 260

Such as not twenty and two wains could move  
Stout and four-wheeled, he raised on high and set  
As mighty door-stone to the cavern's mouth.  
And down he sat and milked the sheep and goats  
Each as was due, and under every dam  
He placed her youngling, but the milk he halved.  
One half he curdled and in wicker crates  
He set apart, and one in pails he left,  
That he might drink and make his evening meal.  
Now when an end was made of all his work, 270  
And lit the fire, he spied us and he spake ;

‘ Strangers, who are ye, and whence came ye here  
Over the watery ways ? Sail ye for gain  
Of commerce, or on some adventurous quest  
Intent, as rovers o’er the salt sea foam,  
At hazard of your lives, bearers of woe  
And bale to other men ? ’

He spake ; and we  
At the deep thunder of his voice and sight  
Of his gigantic form quaked, and our souls  
Died in us, yet in turn I answer made ; 280

‘ Achæans we ; from Troy we hither come,  
Driven by every wind across the deep  
Far from our rightful track, yet bound for home,  
For such the counsel and the will of Zeus.  
To Agamemnon, Atreus’ son, we owe  
Allegiance—greatest of all earthly kings—

For that he sacked Troy's famous town and slew  
In fight so many armies. Wherefore now  
We clasp thy knees as suppliants, and pray  
For hospitable boon, as are the due 290  
And right of stranger : reverence then the Gods,  
O mighty Lord, for we thy suppliants are,  
And Zeus the God of strangers, who consorts  
With stranger and with suppliant on their way,  
Vengeance exacts for wrong unto them done.'

I spake, and he made pitiless reply ;  
'Senseless thou art or else from far hast come,  
To bid me fear the Gods or shun their wrath.  
We of the Cyclops' race reckon not of Zeus  
Or of your Gods—for mightier far are we— 300  
Nor thee nor yet thy fellows would I spare  
For fear of Zeus, but that I will it so.  
But say, where didst thou bring thy ship to land,  
Was it far hence or near?'

Thus cunningly  
He spake, but his false guile could not prevail,  
And meeting craft with craft I answer made ;  
'Our ship Poseidon, the earth-shaking God,  
Drove on a headland of your rocky coast,  
And, for the wind blew strongly from the sea,  
Brake it in pieces ; I, with these my friends, 310  
Am here from shipwreck and destruction saved.'

Thus I ; but he with merciless intent



Made answer none, but rushing on us seized  
Two of my band, and, dashing them like whelps  
Upon the ground, beat out their brains, till all  
The rocky floor was swimming with their blood.  
Then limb by limb he hewed them into bits,  
And making ready for his evening meal,  
Like mountain lion gorged himself on flesh,  
On entrail, bone, and marrow, and ceased not 320  
Whilst aught remained. But we the witnesses  
Of these foul deeds held up our hands to Zeus  
In helpless anguish and with bitter tears.

Now when the Cyclops' greedy maw was filled  
With milk and human flesh, he stretched himself  
At length within the cave amid his flocks ;  
And I stole near, and, hand upon my sword,  
Felt for the beating of his heart, with thought  
To pierce him through, but from my purpose stayed,  
Lest slaying him we too might perish there ; 330  
For vainly might we strive by strength of ours  
From the high gate to roll the massy stone.  
So grieving sore we waited for the day.

When rosy Eos brightened in the sky,  
His fire he kindled and his sheep he milked,  
Each as was due, and under every dam  
He placed her youngling. Now when every task  
Was duly done, two other of our band  
He seized, and of them made his mid-day meal ;

Then having fed he drave his fat flocks forth, 340  
Lifting the mighty door-stone and again  
Setting it down as tightly as a man  
Doth close his quiver's lid ; and with loud whoop  
The Cyclops towards the mountain led his flocks.  
But I was left devising in my heart  
Dark schemes of vengeance and of high renown,  
If kind Athené should her sanction grant.

And this the counsel was which seemed the best.  
By the fold lay a mighty club yet green,  
Which from an olive stem the wretch had hewed 350  
To be his staff when dry ; lofty it was,  
And stout as the tall mast in the dark hull  
Of broad-beamed merchantman, which o'er the sea  
Moves with its twenty oars. So seemed to us  
That mighty spar. From it one fathom's length  
I cut, and bade my comrades sharpen it ;  
And they made smooth the pole, but I stood by  
And fined it to a point, then in the flame  
I tempered and i' the litter of the cave  
I hid it ; next I bade my comrades choose 360  
By lot among them who with me should make  
The venture and with that dark beam should pierce  
The Cyclops' eye when he lay locked in sleep.  
So they cast lots, and the lots fell on four  
Whom I were fain to choose, and as the fifth  
I joined their band. Then home the Cyclops came

At close of day from shepherding his flocks,  
His fleecy flocks—and each and all he drave  
Within the cave, nor left he aught without—  
Or that his mind foreboded what should be, 370  
Or that the God so willed it, I know not.

Straightway the door-stone huge he raised and closed,  
And sat him down, and milked the sheep and goats,  
Each as was due, and under every dam  
He placed her youngling ; but when all his task  
Was now fulfilled two other of our band  
He seized, and of them made his evening meal.  
Then to the Cyclops I drew near and spake,  
Bearing an ivy bowl of the dark wine ;

‘ Now that thy feast on human flesh is o’er, 380  
Take Cyclops, drink and know what goodly wine  
We had aboard our ship. E’en now I thought  
To bear it to thee as an offering,  
If haply thou wouldst pity and release  
And send us home ; but savage is thy rage.  
O cruel wretch, how dost thou deem that men  
Shall e’er again come to thee when thy deeds  
So ruthless are ? ’

He took, and drained the bowl,  
Rejoicing greatly in the honied draught,  
And craved for more ;

‘ Give me to drink again, 390  
And tell me what thy name, that I may grant

A gift to gladden thee, such gift as host  
May give to guest. Surely in Cyclops' land  
The clustering vine, nurtured by Heaven's soft showers,  
Is wondrous sweet, but this a very stream  
Of Nectar and Ambrosia seems to flow.'

He spake, and I again the dark wine gave.  
Thrice did I bear it to him, and thrice he  
In his mad folly drained the cup ; but when  
The mighty juice had wrought upon his brain,  
In gentle speech I said ;

‘Cyclops, erewhile  
Thou didst desire to know the name whereby  
I have been famous, hearken then and give  
As host to stranger guest thy promised gift.  
My name is Noman ; Noman am I styled  
By sire and mother and my comrades all.’

Thus I, but he with purpose pitiless  
Made answer ;

‘Thee then, Noman, last of all  
Will I devour, and this thy gift shall be.’  
Then sinking backward with his face upturned  
And his huge neck bent round he lay ; and sleep,  
Great lord of all, subdued him too ; and thick  
From throat and mouth he spued his horrid feast  
Of wine and human flesh, as drunk he lay.  
Then in the ashes hot I thrust the pole  
And held it till it glowed, cheering meanwhile

With speech my comrades lest their heart should fail.  
But when that olive stake, green though it was,  
Grew warm to burning and shone fierce with heat,  
I drew it from the fire, my men stood round, 420  
And Heaven inspired the courage of despair.  
So seizing the sharp spar they thrust it home  
Into his single eye, whilst I above  
Round and round whirled it, e'en as shipwright whirls  
The spinning auger in a vessel's plank,  
While from below his comrades with a strap  
Quickened its constant and revolving speed ;  
Thus in his eye we made the blazing spar  
To spin all blood-bedabbled. In the breath  
Of that fierce scorching heat eyelid and brow 430  
Were singed, and as the eyeball burnt, its roots  
Hissed in the flame. As when some craftsman dips  
In the cold stream or hissing axe or adze  
To temper and give strength unto the steel,  
So round that stake of olive hissed his eye.  
Then broke an awful cry ; the echoing cave  
Rang round in answer, and in fear we fled.  
But he plucked forth the blood-bedabbled spar,  
And, mad with torment cast it far away,  
And on his brethren called, who dwelt around 440  
In caverns on the windy mountain-tops.  
And at his call they flocked from every side,  
And gathering round the cave they sought the cause

Of his distress ;

‘ Say, Polyphemus, why  
Art so disquieted and roarest thus  
In the ambrosial night, scaring our sleep ?  
Is it some mortal driving off thy flocks,  
Or some one slaying thee by craft or might ?’  
To them he answer made from out his cave ;

‘ Noman, my friends, slays me by craft, not might ?’ 450  
Which when they heard they swiftly made reply ;

‘ If no man hurts thee and thou art alone,  
Idle it were to shun the sore disease  
Which Zeus doth send thee ; rather make thy prayer  
Unto thy sire Poseidon and thy King.’

They spake, and went their way, and in my heart  
I laughed to think how my false name and craft  
Had fooled them. But with racking torment vexed,  
And groaning sore, the Cyclops felt his way  
Unto the door, lifted the massy stone, 460  
And there with outstretched arms he sat him down,  
If that he might on some of us lay hold,  
Forth issuing with the sheep. Witless in sooth  
He deemed me to be caught by such device !  
But with myself I communed how I might  
Best save my comrades and myself from death ;  
And many a web of plot and plan I wove,  
All for dear life, when peril was so near,  
Till at the last this counsel seemed the best.



Well-bred and sturdy were the Cyclops' rams 470  
And fair with fleece as dark as violet ;  
And these with twisted withes from the bed  
On which the monster slept I silent bound  
By three together ; on each middle sheep  
One of my comrades rode, on either flank  
Protected by the twain that walked outside ;  
So to three sheep one man was thus assigned.  
But I made choice of him that was the best  
And goodliest of the flock, and under him  
Wrapped in his shaggy fleece with steady grasp 480  
And face upturned I steadily held on.  
Thus grieving sore we waited for the day.

When rosy Eos brightened in the sky,  
Forth to their wonted pastures streamed the rams,  
While round the folds bleated the un milked ewes,  
Sore pressed with their soft burden ; but their lord,  
Albeit in torment, felt along the backs  
Of every ram, as they before him stood.  
Poor fool, who dream'd not that those woolly flocks  
Bore my companions bound beneath their breasts ! 490  
Then last of all paced forth the sturdy ram  
Burdened with me, my load of anxious care,  
And his own fleece. Him, when the Cyclops felt  
And knew, he thus addressed ;

‘Oh why dear ram

Art last of all the flock to leave the cave ?

Thou who wert never wont to keep the rear,  
But foremost wending with long strides to crop  
The tender blossoms of the flowery mead,  
And foremost by the river, foremost too  
At close of day to turn thee to thy fold. 500  
But now thou goest last. Dost thou in sooth  
Grieve for thy master, whom an evil man  
And his accursed crew have sightless made  
When he had wrought with wine upon my brain.  
Accursed Noman, who methinks e'en yet  
Shall meet his doom? Ah, couldst thou feel like me,  
And speechful grow, and tell me where he lurks,  
Then would I dash his brains upon the floor  
Of this wide cavern, and my heart should find  
Rest from the pains which this nought-worthy wretch, 510  
Noman, has wreaked upon me.'

Thus he spake,  
And forth he sent the ram ; but when we came  
A short way from the cavern and the fold,  
I loosed me and my comrades ; then with speed,  
And many a look behind us cast, we drave  
The fat and fine-limbed sheep on board our ship ;  
Where with our friends we greeting had, who joyed  
To see us saved ; yet fain would they have grieved  
For those whom we had lost. But I would not.  
Frowning I bade them shed no tear, but swift 520  
Convey aboard the fleecy flocks, and sail

O'er the salt waters. They obeyed, and each  
In order ranged, they on the hoary main  
Smote with their oars together ; but when we  
Were far from shore as voice might barely reach,  
With biting taunt I to the Cyclops spake ;

‘So, Cyclops, as it seems, for all thy might  
And all my weakness, thou canst not devour  
My comrades in thy den. Methinks ’twas sure  
Thy evil deeds should find thee out at last. 530  
Thou wretch, who daredst feed within thy house  
Upon thy stranger guests ! Wherefore hath Zeus  
And the just Gods chastised thee.’

Thus I spake,  
But he waxed wroth, and in his fury tore  
From off a lofty hill the topmost crag,  
And hurled it with so sure a cast it grazed  
The tiller of our ship, and just ahead  
Of the dark prow it plunged ; whereat the sea  
Rose in a mighty reflux wave that swelled  
And swept us back, and drave us to the shore. 540  
But with both hands I grasped a pole and thrust  
The galley off the land, by gest and nod  
Beck’ning my comrades to their oars to bend,  
If they would ’scape destruction. They forthwith  
Obeyed ; yet when we had twice measured o’er  
Our distance from the land, I thought again  
The Cyclops to provoke, but from all sides

And with beseeching words my comrades sought  
To hold me back from speech ; ‘ for why,’ they said,  
‘ Why, Madman, thus enrage this savage wight, 550  
Who hath but now made seaward such a cast,  
That back upon the strand he drave our bark.  
Surely we thought that we had perished there,  
And had he heard our speech or sound of voice,  
Our heads and our ship’s timbers had been crushed  
With some rough rock, so mightily he hurls.’

On my proud spirit idly fell their words,  
And wrathfully to him I once more spake ;  
‘ Cyclops, if one of mortal men e’er ask  
Who doomed thee to disgraceful blindness, say 560  
It was ODYSSEUS, great Laertes’ son,  
Waster of cities, Lord of Ithaca.’

I spake, and he, sore groaning, thus replied ;  
‘ Woe’s me, an oracle of ancient day  
Comes o’er my mind ; I do remember how  
There once dwelt here a wise and gifted seer,  
One Telemus, the son of Eurymus,  
Mighty in age and in prophetic lore,  
Who bade me know these things should come to pass,  
And that Odysseus should me sightless make ; 570  
But I had thought in him to see a man  
Glorious of form and clothed with mighty strength,  
Not the poor puny weakling, who with wine  
Mastered my brain and reft me of my sight.

Come then, Odysseus, back to land, and I  
Will welcome thee with hospitable gifts,  
And pray th' earth-shaking God, whose son I am,  
That he should guide thee on thy way ; and he  
And he alone of Gods and mortal men  
Shall heal me of my hurt, if so he will.' 580  
He spake, but I replied ;

‘ O would that I  
Could slay thee soul and body, so methinks  
Not e'en th' earth-shaking God could cure thy wound.'

I spake, and he unto the starry Heaven  
Lifted his hand, and to Poseidon prayed ;

‘ Poseidon, dark-haired God, who hold'st the earth  
As with a girdle, hear me, if in truth  
I am thy son, and thou my father art—  
Grant that this mighty ravager of towns,  
Odysseus, he who dwells in Ithaca, 590  
Laertes' son, may never see his home.  
Yet if 'tis fated that he must return,  
Then late in time and wretched in estate  
With loss of friends and on a foreign bark  
May he return to sorrow in his halls.'

He said, and to his prayer the dark-haired God  
Gave ear. But he with strength beyond compare  
Heaved a yet mightier fragment of the crag  
Than that which first he hurled ; circling in air  
Fell the vast mass behind our dark-prowed ship, 600

And almost grazed our rudder ; but the sea,  
As fell that rock, rose in a mighty wave  
And bore us onward to the neighbouring shore.

Then came we to the isle where lay our ships,  
And all our grieving friends were gathered round  
Looking for our return, and to the strand  
We drew our bark and stepped forth on the beach.  
There of the flocks ta'en from the Cyclops' hold  
We made partition just, that none might say  
That he through me was lacking of his due. 610  
Yet unto me alone my warrior friends  
Assigned the ram ; and him upon the shore  
To the storm-gatherer Zeus, old Cronos' son  
And lord of all, I sacrificed with fire,  
Burning the thighs, but Zeus had no regard  
Unto my offering ; in his secret mind  
He was devising for my ships and men  
Utter destruction.

So the livelong day  
We sat and feasted on the meat and wine  
Until the sun went down, but when night fell 620  
On the sea-shore we laid us down to rest.

Now when the rosy-fingered Dawn arose,  
I bade my comrades go aboard and loose  
The cables, and they went and sat them down,  
And with their oars smote on the hoary main.  
So we sailed on grieving at heart for those  
Who were no more, yet joying to be saved."



## BOOK X

## SUMMARY OF BOOK X

ODYSSEUS pursues his story and tells how with twelve ships he sailed on till he reached the island of Æolus, who feasted him and gave him a wallet in which he had bound the adverse winds. For nine days Odysseus sailed over the sea till on the tenth his native land came in sight ; and then, when he was overpowered by sleep, his companions imprudently untied the wallet. The winds rushed forth and swept them back to the realm of Æolus, who, believing that they were doomed by Heaven, refused them further aid.

Thence in seven days they reached the country of the cannibal Læstrygonians, where they were attacked, and lost eleven out of their twelve ships. With one surviving crew and ship, Odysseus sailed on till he reached Cœa, the island of the Enchantress Circe, where, after casting lots, one half of the crew went forth with Eurylochus to explore, the others staying with Odysseus by the ship. The explorers reached the magic palace of Circe, and all save Eurylochus, who escaped to tell the tale, were transformed into swine.

Odysseus tells how, resisting all entreaties, he went forth to the rescue of his companions, and on the way he met Hermes in the form of a youth, and received from him the magical herb "Moly," with instructions against Circe's charms ; how he entered her palace, subdued the Enchantress, and compelled the restoration of his companions to their original form. The rest of his company whom he had left with the ship having now rejoined him, they spent a year in Circe's halls.

He describes how Circe then warned him of yet another voyage incumbent on him to the world of Spirits, and bade him there consult the seer Teiresias ; and how they departed, and, after losing one of their crew, Elpenor, through his own carelessness, they made ready for their voyage to Hades.

## BOOK X

“ THEN to that island where dwelt Æolus,  
Friend of the Gods, the son of Hippotas,  
We bent our course. It is a floating isle,  
Girdled with wall of brass, and from the sea  
Rises th’ unbroken cliff. To him were born  
Wìthin his halls twelve children, six of whom  
Were mighty sons and six were daughters fair.  
These maidens to his sons he gave to wife,  
And ever with their Sire they hold high feast  
And with their lady Mother ; round them lie      10  
Ten thousand dainties, and the savoury reek  
Blends with the roar of wassail, till court-yard  
And house re-echo through the livelong day.  
But all the night they with their chaste wives sleep  
In carvéd beds with coverlet o’erlaid.

So to their city and their stately home  
We came, and straightway for one month their king

Did make me welcome, closely asking me  
Of Ilium and the Argive fleet and those  
Of the Greek host, who homeward fared ; and I 20  
Told him our tale and bade him tell our way,  
And send us forth ; nor did he say us no,  
But in most courteous wise an escort gave.  
And in a wallet made from oxen's hide,  
Of nine years old, he bound the blustering winds ;  
For him the son of Cronos had assigned  
Their keeper, at his will to raise or stay  
Their stormy blasts ; and these he bound with thong,  
A silver shining thong, and made them fast  
In the ship's hold, and bade no breath to blow, 30  
Save the soft Zephyr, which should onward waft  
Us and our galleys. But it might not be ;  
We perished by our madness.

For nine days  
And nine nights on we sailed, till with the tenth  
Appeared my native land. So near we drew  
That we might mark men tend the beacon lights.  
Then crept upon my weary eyes a gentle sleep,  
For ever in my hand I held the sheet,  
Nor trusted to my friends, that so we might  
The sooner win unto our native land. 40  
Meanwhile 'twas whispered round my crew, that I  
Had store of gold and silver, costly gifts  
From Æolus, the son of Hippotas.

Then one to other spake ;

‘How is our Chief

Favoured and honoured wheresoe'er he goes.

Lo ! he returns laden with Trojan spoils

And we, the sharers of his wanderings,

Come empty-handed home. Let us then see

What are these gifts which Æolus hath giv'n,

What stores of precious metal lie concealed 50

Within this leathern wallet.'

So they spake,

For evil counsels had the mastery ;

And they unbound the wallet, and the winds

Rushed forth in stormy hurricane and bore

My loud-lamenting comrades o'er the main.

But I awoke and questioned with my soul

## Whether to cast myself into the sea

And perish, or in silence to endure

And cumber upper air. And I endured

And bore to live, and muffled in my robe 60

In the ship's hold I lay. Before the gale

Scudded our galleys, and my comrades wept.

So back we drave unto th' Æolian isle,

And stepping there ashore we water drew

And made our meal beside our ships ; but when

We now had tasted of our bread and wine,

With but one comrade and a herald I

Went to the stately hall of Æolus,

And found him feasting with his wife and sons.  
Then on the threshold, hard beside the door, 70  
We sat us down, and they much marvelling  
Asked of me, 'whence dost come, what demon's spite  
Hath handled thee so hardly? With all care  
Surely we sent thee forth, that thou might'st win  
Thy country, and whate'er thy home holds dear.'

So spake they, but in bitter grief I said;  
'My foolish comrades and a fatal sleep  
Have done me this annoy; but O my friends,  
Heal me of this my wound, for yours the power.'

Thus I with soothing words; but silent all 80  
They sat, till Æolus their sire replied;

'Go! get thee hence, thou vilest of mankind,  
Hence from our island! Think not that I give  
Or aid or comfort to the wretch whom Heaven  
Doth hold in anger. Hence, I say, for sure  
Thou camest hither of the Gods abhorred.'

He spake, and thus dismissed me from his halls  
Sore grieving. Thence with aching hearts we sailed,  
For with the fruitless labour of the oar  
My comrades' spirit sank, nor was there sign 90  
Of favouring breeze to waft us on our way.  
So for six days and nights we held our course,  
Till on the sev'nth wide-gated Lamos rose,  
The stronghold of the Læstrygonian realm.  
There the returning shepherd with his flock



Hails his outgoing fellow ; there methinks  
A sleepless man might earn a double wage,  
Tending the kine and shepherding the flocks,  
For there the pathways meet of Night and Day.

There is a stately haven girdled round 100  
With rocks precipitous ; two headlands bluff  
Stand facing each the other at its mouth  
And make the passage strait. Into that pool  
My comrades steered their barks and made them fast  
Each by the other ; for within its bounds  
Nor wave nor ripple troubled the bright face  
Of those still waters ; but my ship alone  
By the land's utmost verge without the port  
I anchored to a rock, and took my stand  
Upon the watch-tower of a lofty crag. 110  
There could I spy nor oxen in the field  
Nor men at work, only the curling smoke  
Go upward from the earth. So I sent forth  
To spy the land and its inhabitants  
Two comrades and a herald ; and they went  
Along a level track, whereby the wains  
Drew to the town the timber from the hills.  
And there without the city walls they found  
The strong-limbed daughter of Antiphates ;  
For to the clear fount of Artacia she 120  
Had come, as was the wont, to draw and bear  
Unto the town. Then they beside her stood

And asked her of that realm, who was its lord,  
And who his subjects. So to her father's halls  
She led them, and they went within and found  
His wife, in bulk like some high mountain peak,  
Most foul of sight. Forth from the market-place  
She called her mate Antiphates ; and he  
Compassed their death with treacherous deceit.  
One of our friends he seized to make him food 130  
Unto his mid-day meal ; the other twain  
Fled to the ships ; but he his war-cry raised  
Whilst far and near, like giants and not men,  
Poured through the city the stout Læstrygons.  
Down from the crags they hurled the massy rocks,  
Each rock a load such as a man might bear,  
Whilst by the galleys rose a deadly din  
Of dying men and shattered barks, and they,  
Like fishers spearing fish, their prey bore off  
To their unhallowed meal. But whilst within 140  
The deep recesses of the haven's mouth  
They did their murderous work, I drew my blade  
And smote the hawser of my dark-prowed ship,  
And with loud warning voice I bade my men  
Bend to their oars and fly the coming doom.  
And they, as men who fear to die, struck hard  
Upon the water, and my good ship flew  
Forth from the beetling rocks to open sea ;  
But all save us there perished.

On we sailed,  
Grieving at heart to lose our dearest friends 150  
Yet joying to be saved. At length we came  
Unto th' Æœan isle, where Circe dwelt—  
Circe, dread Goddess yet of mortal speech,  
The fair-haired Circe. She the sister was  
Of fell Æætēs, for th' enlightening Sun  
And Persé, child of Ocean, gave them life.  
There in a sheltering haven silently  
Under the guidance of some favouring God  
We came to land. Two days, two nights on shore  
Eating our souls away with weariness 160  
And grief we lay; but when the fair-haired Morn  
Brought the third day, grasping my sword and spear  
I climbed an out-look that o'erhung my ship,  
If haply I might spy some sign of men  
Or list a mortal voice. So there I stood  
Upon the rocky ridge of the high mount,  
And from the earth's broad ways athwart the copse  
I saw the smoke go up from Circe's halls;  
Which when I saw I doubted with myself  
Whether to make adventure in the quest 170  
Of fuller knowledge. As I mused, methought  
'Twere best to give my crew their mid-day meal  
Beside our ship on the sea-beach, and then  
To send them forth to make discovery.  
And now as I drew near unto our ship,

Some God in pity of my sad estate,  
Full in my path did place an antlered stag.  
Forth from his woodland pasture he had come,  
Smitten by the fierce heat to slake his thirst  
At some cool stream. Him through his spine I smote, 180  
And through and through him drove the brazen shaft,  
And bellowing in the dust he fell and died.  
On him I set my foot and from the wound  
Drew forth the shaft and laid it on the grass.  
Then osier twig and willow-wand I wove  
Into a rope one fathom long, wherewith  
I tied the feet of the gigantic beast,  
And with him o'er my shoulder cross-ways slung  
I sought my ship, leaning upon my spear ;  
For that the burden of that quarry huge 190  
Was more than I might bear on one poor arm.  
And as I cast him down before my crew  
I stood by each, and bade them man by man  
Be of good cheer, speaking with honied words ;  
    ' Fear not, my friends ; we shall not yet go down  
Unto the halls of Hades, till the hour  
Of our appointed destiny shall come.  
Go to—whilst we have store of food on board  
Eat we and drink, nor suffer hunger's pangs.'  
    I spake, and they gave ear, and casting off 200  
The robes wherein they muffled were, they viewed  
With wonder the huge beast stretched on the strand.

But when their eyes were satiate with the sight,  
They washed their hands and spread the goodly feast.

So through the day until the sun went down,  
We sat and feasted on the meat and wine ;  
But when the darkness of the evening fell,  
On the sea-shore we laid us down to rest.

Now when the rosy-fingered Dawn arose,  
I gathered all my folk and thus I spake ; 210

‘ Friends that have much and long endured, give ear ;  
Nought know we—neither where the place of night  
Or morn shall be, nor where th’ enlightening sun  
Shall dip below the earth or rise again ;  
Yet if for our estate, so low and dark,  
Counsel there be, then let us counsel take  
E’en though I see it not. Erewhile I clomb  
Yon rocky outlook, and descried this isle  
Ringed by the boundless main. Low lies the land,  
But from its midst I saw with mine own eyes 220  
Smoke upward rise from forest and from brake.’

I spake, and their heart failed them, for they thought  
Of the foul deeds by Læstrygonian done  
And savage Cyclops, and they raised their voice  
And wept ; but little good was there in tears.  
Then in two bands I numbered all my men,  
And set o’er each its captain ; one I led,  
The other by Eurylochus was ruled.  
But when we shook the brazen helm, the lot

Fell on Eurylochus, and forth he went, 230

And two and twenty comrades in his train.

Grieving they went, grieving we saw them go.

So in the forest glades, in a fair spot,

They came to Circe's bower of polished stone,

Where round her halls the mountain wolves kept watch,

And lions whom her evil charms had tamed.

Yet were they gentle ; on my men they made

No rude assault, but round them ramped and fawned

With their long tails, as hounds are wont to fawn

About their master, coming from the feast 240

With dainties laden ; so upon my crew

The strong-clawed wolves and lions fawned ; but they

At the strange sight of those most monstrous beasts

Were sore dismayed. And at the gate they stood

Of Circe, fair-tressed Goddess, and within

They heard her sweet voice singing, as she plied

Her loom divine, such as beseemed the craft

Of Goddesses immortal, full of grace

And fair and subtle. Then Polites spake,

Dearest to me, and wisest of our crew ; 250

‘ Oh, friends, within is one who plies the loom,

Singing with sweet voice, till the paved hall

Re-echoes to her song—whether she be

Goddess or mortal woman, let us speak.’

He spake, and they called on her, and she came,

And oped the shining doors and bade them in,



And in their blindness they all followed her—  
All save Eurylochus, whose boding mind  
Forecasted treachery. He went not in.  
But them she led within, and set them down 260  
On chairs of state, and mixed a honied draught  
Of curds and barley and of Pramnian wine,  
And poured the deadly drugs, that they no more  
Might have remembrance of their native land.  
But when they tasted of th' enchanted cup,  
Straightway she smote them with her wand, and they  
In face and voice and bristly form became  
Swine, and were captives in the swinish styes ;  
Yet was their mind such as in days of old.  
So, grieving sore, they in their pens were mewed, 270  
And Circe fed them with the beechen mast  
And cornéd berries and the acorn wild,  
The food of grovelling swine. But to our ship  
Returned Eurylochus to tell the tale  
Of the foul fate that had our friends o'erta'en.  
Though fain to speak, scarce could he say the word,  
So sad he was at heart, and to his eyes  
Gathered the tears, and grief possessed his soul,  
But when, much marvelling, we questioned him,  
At length he told us of our comrades' fate ; 280  
    ' We went as thou didst bid us, noble Chief,  
Through the oak copse, and in the forest glades  
We found a stately bower of polished stone

Set in a goodly spot, and there was one—  
Goddess or mortal woman who may say?—  
Who plied her mighty loom and sweetly sang.  
On her our comrades called, and forth she came,  
And oped the shining doors and bade them in,  
And in their blindness they all followed her—  
All save myself, who feared some treachery, 290  
And went not in. They vanished from my sight,  
Nor came again, though long I sat and watched.'

He spake, and I about my shoulders cast  
My broad and silver-mounted blade of bronze,  
And took my bow, and bade him lead the way.  
But with both hands he seized me, and with tears  
He clasped my knees and spake the winged words ;  
'Take me not thither, O beloved of Heaven,  
For well I know that thou wilt ne'er return,  
Nor bring us back one of the friends we've lost. 300  
Fly then with these, the few that yet remain,  
And 'scape the evil day.'

Such was his speech,  
But I replied ; 'Stay thou, Eurylochus,  
And eat and drink thy fill beside our ship,  
But I will go, for so 'tis on me laid.'

So from the sea-shore and the ship I went.  
But as I strode adown the sacred glades  
Tow'ards the Enchantress Circe's stately bower,  
Hermes, the Master of the golden wand,

Met me as I drew nigh. Like some fair youth 310  
With the first down upon his lip he seemed,  
When life is young and gracious ; and he clasped  
Me by the hand, and called on me and said ;

‘O whither o’er these savage wilds dost fare,  
Hapless, alone, unknowing of the land ?  
Lo in the crowded styes of Circe’s halls  
Thy swinish comrades are immured. Dost think  
To set them free ? Nay rather thou thyself  
Shalt bide a captive with the captive herd.

But come and I will show thee from these toils 320  
A way of safety. Take this precious herb  
To bear thee harmless in the day of fate.  
Then seek the halls of Circe fearing nought,  
For I will teach thee all her deadly arts.  
For thee the Sorceress a draught shall brew,  
And in it cast her baleful witcheries ;  
Yet shall her spells against the charm I give  
Fall impotent. List then what thou shalt do.

When Circe smites thee with her magic wand  
Draw thy keen blade and threaten her with death. 330  
But she in fear will tempt thee with her love,  
Which see thou slight not—so she shall release  
Thy friends from bondage, and entreat thee well.  
But make her swear by the Immortal Gods  
A solemn oath, that she will plan nor plot  
Some evil foul against thee, nor degrade

And ruin thee, what time of weapons reft  
She hath thee at her mercy.'

So he spake,  
And straightway gave to me the precious charm,  
And told its virtues. From the ground 'twas dug, 340  
And black its root, but milky-white its flower.  
In Heaven its name is Moly, but on earth  
Scarcely may mortal man extract that herb  
From out the ground. The Gods have power alone.

So to Olympus through the woody isle  
Hermes departed, and I went my way  
To Circe's Halls, sore troubled in my mind.  
But by the fair-tressed Goddess' gate I stood,  
And called upon her, and she heard my voice,  
And forth she came and oped the shining doors 350  
And bade me in ; and sad at heart I went.  
Then did she set me on a stately chair,  
Studded with silver nails of cunning work,  
With footstool for my feet, and mixed a draught  
Of her foul witcheries in golden cup,  
For evil was her purpose. From her hand  
I took the cup and drained it to the dregs,  
Nor felt the magic charm ; but with her rod  
She smote me, and she said, 'Go get thee hence  
And herd thee with thy fellows in the sty.' 360

So spake she, and straightway I drew my sword  
Upon the witch, and threatened her with death ;

But with a mighty cry she fled away,  
And clasped my knees, and wailing sore, she said ;  
    ‘Who and whence art thou among mortal men ?  
Who were thy parents, what thy native land ?  
Much do I marvel thou couldst scatheless drink  
From that charmed cup, which never man before  
Could bear to taste. But now thy soul is proof  
To all my incantations. Surely thou                   370  
Art that Odysseus quick and keen of wit,  
Whom Hermes ever said should come one day  
In his black ship, as home from Troy he fared.  
Come then put up thy sword, and on my couch  
We will take thought of love and trustful rest.’

She said, but I made answer to her speech ;  
    ‘How Circe dost thou bid me gentle be—  
Thou who within these walls hast turned my friends  
Into the form of brutish swine, and now  
Plotting against me in thy crafty mind                   380  
Dost tempt me with the promise of thy love  
To ruin me, what time of weapons reft  
Thou hast me at thy mercy. Nay in sooth,  
Nought will I of th’ endearments of thy love,  
Unless thou swear’st a mighty oath that thou  
Wilt plot no evil ’gainst me.’

  So I spake,  
And she made solemn oath, and I went up  
Unto her stately couch.

Now while we spake,  
Four handmaids plied their tasks in bower and hall ;  
Children they were of fountain and of wood 390  
And holy stream, that rushes to the sea.  
One on the chairs the purple coverings laid,  
And spread beneath a cloth of linen fine ;  
Another drew the silver tables near  
And on them set the baskets of pure gold ;  
A third the sweet wine mixed in silver bowl  
And set the golden goblets, while the fourth  
The water bare, and 'neath the tripod huge  
Kindled the flame ; but when the boiling flood  
Glowed in the gleaming cauldron, in a bath 400  
I sat me down, and she from out a vase  
O'er head and shoulders poured the temperate stream,  
Until my deadly weariness was past.  
But when the bath was o'er and I with oil  
Anointed was, round me a tunic fair  
And cloak she cast, and on a stately seat  
Of cunning work, studded with silver nails,  
She set me, and beneath my feet she placed  
A footstool. Then from out a golden jar  
Into a silver basin, o'er my hands 410  
A handmaid poured the water, and set near  
Unto my side a polished board, whereon  
A reverend house-dame laid the wheaten bread  
And store of dainties, and she bade me eat.



But little pleasure might I find therein.  
Apart I sat brooding on other thoughts  
Foreboding evil.

But when Circe saw  
That thus I sat and grieved, nor tasted food,  
She drew her near and spake these winged words ;  
‘ Why dost thou sit like one bereft of speech, 420  
Eating away thy soul, nor tasting food ?  
Dost deem me false ? There is no cause for fear,  
For I have sworn to thee a binding oath.’

She spake, and I made answer ; ‘ Nay, what man  
Of upright soul would bear to taste of food  
Till he had seen with his own eyes his friends  
Set free from bondage ? If in very truth  
Thou bid’st me eat and drink then set them free,  
That I may see and know them face to face.’

I spake, and Circe stepped across the hall 430  
With magic wand in hand, threw wide the doors,  
And like in form to swine of nine years old  
Forth from the sty she drove my changeling crew.  
They stood before her, and th’ Enchantress passed  
Among them, and anointed each in turn  
With a new charm, whereat the bristly hides,  
Which she had wrought by incantation foul,  
Fell off, and they were men, and seemed in sooth  
Younger and fairer than they were before.  
And they knew me, and to my hands they clung 440

In grief most passionate, and thro' the hall  
Rang their loud wail, and e'en the Goddess' self  
Had pity ; so she drew her near, and spake ;

‘ O wise Odysseus, of the race of Zeus,  
Go to thy ship and draw it high on shore ;  
Then in the sea-caves stow away thy goods,  
And come again and bring thy friends with thee.’

She spake, and I gave ear, and straightway went  
Down to my ship and the sea-shore ; and there  
I found my comrades weeping bitterly, 450  
And grieving sore. As when tow'rds eventide,  
What time the kine wend homeward to the byre  
Filled with rich pasture, you may see the calves  
With sportive gambols and with lowing loud  
All unconfined in pen, play round their dams ;  
So gathered round me all my weeping friends,  
As though they deemed that seeing me they saw  
Their land, their home, their rugged Ithaca,  
Where they were born and bred. Then through their  
tears

They spake,

‘ Right gladly do we see thy face, 460  
O Heaven-born Chief—gladly as though we saw  
Our Ithaca itself. Come, tell us then,  
How did our comrades perish ?’

So they said ;

But I in soothing strain replied ; ‘ Nay, first

Draw we our ship upon the beach, and stow  
Our goods in the sea-caves, then follow me  
To Circe's sacred bower where ye shall see  
Our comrades feasting at th' unstinted feast.'

I spake, and they gave ear unto my words,  
All save Eurylochus, who held them back, 470  
And thus gainsaid me ; ' Whither would ye fare ?  
Are ye so much in love with mortal ills,  
So sore distraught, that ye would dare to go  
To Circe's halls ? who by her magic art  
Shall turn us all to lions, wolves, or swine,  
And set us to keep guard around her halls.  
Bethink ye of the Cyclops, what he did  
When our lost comrades went into his cave  
With this Odysseus, by whose rash resolve  
They perished.'

So he said ; and in my mind 480  
I doubted sore whether to draw the blade  
That hung beside me and to cleave his head,  
Albeit a kinsman ; but my comrades all  
Gathered around me, and with soothing words  
Restrained my hand ; ' at thy command,' they said,  
' O Heaven-born Chief, he by the ship shall bide ;  
But lead thou us to Circe's sacred halls.'

So from the sea-shore all our band went up,  
Nor by the ship tarried Eurylochus ;  
He followed too, in fear of my reproof. 490

Meanwhile right courteously within her halls  
With baths, and oil, and woollen raiment fair,  
Circe refreshed my crew. Them at the feast  
We found carousing, but when face to face  
They looked upon each other their loud grief  
Broke forth, and through the palace went a wail.  
Then the fair Goddess drew her near and said ;

‘Son of Laertes, O Odysseus wise,  
Wake not this tide of grief. I know myself  
What pains ye suffered on the teeming deep, 500  
What wrongs ye had of foemen on the land.  
Come, then, take meat and drink till in your heart  
Your spirit lives again, such as it was  
When ye set sail from rocky Ithaca.  
Weary and worn ye are, the cruel thought  
Of your long wanderings dwells within your mind,  
And your past grief mars present happiness.’

She spake, and we gave heed ; and day by day  
For a whole year we sat and feasted there.  
So passed the year, the seasons came again, 510  
Moons waned and days waxed long, till spake at last  
My comrades to me ;

‘Hast thou never care  
For thy dear native land, if it so be  
That thou art destined to a safe return  
Unto thy stately palace and thy home.’

They spake, and I gave heed unto their words.

So the whole day until the sun went down  
We sat and feasted on the meat and wine.  
And when the darkness fell my comrades slept  
Throughout the shadowy halls ; but I went up 520  
To Circe's stately bed, and solemnly  
Besought the Goddess, and she heard my prayer.  
'Accomplish now, great Circe'—thus I said—  
'What thou didst promise, send us to our home  
For which I yearn, for which my comrades crave ;  
Who with their sorrow wear away my heart,  
When thou art absent.'

Swift she made reply ;

'Son of Laertes, O Odysseus wise,  
Ye shall no longer tarry in these bowers  
Against your will, yet ere ye steer for home, 530  
Remaineth one last journey to be done—  
E'en to the halls of Hades and his Queen,  
There to consult the soul of the blind Seer,  
Theban Teiresias, whom Persephone  
Made to possess a steadfast mind and wit  
Albeit in death. To him alone this grace  
Was granted ; other souls in those sad realms  
Flit to and fro mere shadows.'

So she spake,

And all my spirit seemed within me crushed.  
Upon the couch I wept, nor longer cared 540  
To live and look upon the light of day.

At length I ceased to wallow in my grief,  
And answer made ;

‘ Who then shall be our guide  
To Hades, where no mortal ship hath sailed ?’  
I spake, and straight the Goddess answer made,  
‘ Son of Laertes, O Odysseus wise,  
Take thou no thought for guide unto thy ship,  
But step the mast and spread the snowy sails,  
And rest thee while the North wind bears thee on.  
But when o’er Ocean’s stream thy bark hath fared 550  
To that waste shore where are the poplars tall,  
And willows on whose boughs no fruit grows ripe,  
The sacred groves of dread Persephone—  
There by deep-eddying Ocean thou shalt moor  
Thy bark, and visit the chill halls of Death,  
Where black Cocytus, tributary stream  
Of Styx, and fiery Phlegethon roll down  
Their waters into Acheron. Hard by,  
Beside the meeting of those floods, there stands  
A mighty rock. Then, Hero, draw thee near, 560  
And dig thee there a ditch one cubit square,  
And therein to the spirits of the dead  
Pour a libation, first of honey mead,  
Then of sweet wine, and last of water pure,  
And o’er the whole sprinkle the snowy flour.  
Next make thy prayer unto the shadowy dead,  
And vow that when to Ithaca thou com’st



Thou wilt heap up the altar with rich gifts  
Within thy halls, and sacrifice to them  
A barren heifer, worthiest of choice, 570  
And to Teiresias a coal-black sheep,  
The noblest of the flock. But when thy prayer  
Unto the nations of the dead is made,  
Slay thou a ram and a black ewe, with heads  
Turned towards Erebus ; but set thy face  
Unto the river, and a ghostly crowd  
Anon shall come about thee. Then command  
Thy friends to flay and roast for sacrifice  
The sheep which thou shalt slay, and to make prayer  
To mighty Pluto and Persephone ; 580  
And draw thy sword and sit thee down and waive  
The disembodied forms from off the blood,  
Until thou speakest with Teiresias.  
There, mighty Lord, to thee shall come the Seer,  
And tell the measure of thy homeward way,  
And all thy journey o'er the teeming deep.'

She spake, and on her golden throne appeared  
The dawn of day, whereat the Goddess threw  
Upon me cloak and tunic, and herself  
Donned a light robe of dazzling white, then drew 590  
Around her waist a fair and golden zone,  
And placed a veil upon her head. Then I  
Aroused each sleeper, and with kindly words  
Bade him awake from slumber and go forth,

For that the Goddess had made plain our way.

They to my words paid heed, yet not e'en so  
Came all away unscathed, for flushed with wine,  
And by the freshness of the air beguiled,  
Apart from all our band Elpenor slept.

Youngest he was, nor first in fray, nor best 600  
In counsel. Suddenly he heard the sound  
Of trampling feet, as to and fro his friends  
Made ready to go forth, heedless upsprang,  
Nor thought by the tall ladder to descend,  
But from the house-roof fell ; so his neck brake  
And his soul went below. Then to my crew  
As they went forth again I spake and said ;

‘Deem ye we go to home and native land ?  
Nay, but another way hath Circe shown,  
E'en to the halls of Hades and his Queen, 610  
That we may counsel with Teiresias.’

Then at my speech their hearts did seem to break,  
They sat them down and wept and tore their hair,  
Yet did their weeping little profit them.

So to our ship and the sea-shore we came  
With lamentation sore and bitter tears,  
But close beside our galley Circe bound  
A ram and a black ewe for sacrifice,  
Passing us by invisible—for who  
May look upon the passing of a God, 620  
Who wills not to be seen by mortal eyes ?”

BOOK XI

## SUMMARY OF BOOK XI

ODYSSEUS pursues the story of his descent to Hades, and of the spirits of the great dead with whom he had converse. He tells how with his companions he came to the limits of the world, the river Oceanus, and the land of the Cimmerians shrouded in perpetual mist, even to the place declared to him by Circe. He describes how, after digging a trench and filling it with sacrificial blood, the spirits of the dead flocked around him, desiring to drink the blood, but how he forbade them all until the Seer Teiresias had approached and prophesied to him the course and end of his wanderings. Next came the spirit of his Mother, and with her he spoke of his home, but he might not embrace her, for when he essayed to touch her she melted into air.

Then passed before him the shades of many noble and great women, daughters and wives and mothers of Gods or Kings or Heroes, and of them he recounts the story.

Here Odysseus pauses in his tale, and after the courtly interchange of speech and gifts, he speaks of some of his comrades who fell in the Trojan War, and with whose spirits he discoursed in Hades. And first of these was Agamemnon, who told him of his cruel murder by Clytemnestra and Ægisthus ; and after him came Achilles, the mighty son of Peleus, with whom he talked ; but Aias, still wrathful that he had been defeated in his contest with Odysseus for the arms of Achilles, would not hold converse with him, but passed by in sullen silence.

And after these Odysseus tells how he saw Minos, the judge of the dead, and the great hunter Orion, and Tityus ever gnawed by two vultures, and Tantalus consumed by ceaseless thirst, and Sisyphus toiling hopelessly to roll a huge stone to the mountain top, and last of all the dread Heracles, with bow and arrow and his awful baldric of gold. But when he retired the dead came flocking around, and Odysseus describes how in dread of them he fled, and re-embarking returned down the Ocean stream.

## BOOK XI

“Now when we came unto the shore where lay  
Our bark, we straightway launched it on the flood,  
And raised the mast and sail of the black ship.  
In it we placed the sheep, and grieving sore,  
The hot tears coursing down our cheeks, we went.  
But fair-haired Circe, awful Goddess, sent  
Abaft our dark-prowed ship the favouring breeze,  
To fill our sails and speed us on our way.  
Thus then, our tackle in due order laid,  
We sat, as with the wind and steersman’s hand 10  
The vessel held her course. All through the day  
The sails were filled, as o’er that sea we sped,  
Till sank the sun and the earth’s ways grew dark.  
So to the bounds of Ocean came our ship,  
Where the Cimmerians’ realm in mist and gloom  
Lies ever shrouded ; for the blazing sun  
Ne’er shows to them the brightness of his face,

Or when he moves unto the starry Heaven,  
Or when he turns from Heaven unto the earth ;  
But ceaseless night broods o'er man's hapless race. 20

There to the beach we drew our bark ; on shore  
We placed the sheep and followed Ocean's stream,  
Unto the country, whereof Circe spake.

There Perimedes and Eurylochus  
Held for the sacrifice the sheep, and I  
Drew my keen blade ; yet first a trench I dug,  
In length and breadth a cubit, and therein  
To all the spirits of the dead I poured  
A full libation ; first of honey mead,  
Then of sweet wine, and last of water pure. 30  
But o'er the whole I sprinkled the white flour,  
And oft and long prayed to the shadowy dead,  
And vowed that when to Ithaca I came,  
I would heap up the altar with rich gifts  
Within my halls, and sacrifice to them  
A barren heifer worthiest of choice,  
And to Teiresias a coal-black sheep,  
The noblest of the flock.

Now when due prayer  
Unto the nations of the dead was made,  
I slew the victims, and the dark blood flowed 40  
Into the trench, and forthwith round its verge  
Gathered from Hell the spirits of the dead ;  
Pale brides and youths and wasted aged men



And tender maidens to new grief attuned,  
And heroes slain in war with bloodied arms,  
Whose wounds yet gaped by brazen falchions made.  
And round the trench flitted the phantom crowd  
With awful clamour, and fear seized my soul.  
But soon I bade my comrades flay and burn  
The victims ready for the sacrifice, 50  
And make their prayer to the Immortal Gods,  
To Pluto and to dread Persephone.  
Then drawing my keen blade I stepped between  
The shadowy host, nor suffered them to touch  
The blood, until 'Teiresias' will was known.

Then first the spirit of Elpenor came,  
For in the broad-wayed earth he had no grave.  
In Circe's hall we were perforce constrained  
To leave his corpse unseparated, unwept,  
For we were on this fateful quest then bound. 60  
Him when I saw I pitied, and with tears  
I spake ;

'Elpenor, wherefore hast thou come  
To these sad shades, and though on foot hast thus  
Outstripped me sailing in my sable bark ?'

In mournful strain the phantom answered me ;  
'Son of Laertes, O Odysseus wise,  
Some demon's wrath and the immoderate lust  
Of wine were my undoing. In Circe's house  
I slumbered ; and, when making my descent,

I slipped on the high ladder, and I fell 70  
From roof to basement headlong, in my fall  
Breaking my neck. My soul to Hades fled.  
And now by those not present here—by wife,  
By sire who nurtured thee in tender youth,  
By thy dear son Telemachus at home,  
I do beseech thee, when thou goest hence,  
And by C  a's isle thy ship is moored,  
Remember me, nor leave my hapless corse  
Unwept, unburied, lest the curse of Heaven  
Upon thee fall ; but burn my arms and heap 80  
High on some out-look o'er the hoary main  
A beacon mound, and crown it with the oar,  
Wherewith I oft amid my comrades rowed,  
To mark my hapless fate to future times.'

He spake, and I made answer ; ' Fear thou not,  
Poor soul ; I will in all things do thy will.'

Thus whilst we two in mournful converse sat—  
I with drawn sword stretched o'er the blood-filled trench,  
And on the other side his shadowy form—  
My Mother's spirit, Anticlea, came, 90  
Daughter of great Autolycus, whom I  
When our host sailed from Troy, had left alive.  
Whom when I saw I pitied, and I wept ;  
And yet e'en her I suffered not to touch  
The consecrated blood, until I knew  
Teiresias' pleasure.

Then at length arose  
The awful shadow of the Theban Seer,  
With golden wand. He knew me and he spake ;  
‘Son of Laertes, O Odysseus wise,  
Why hast thou left the light of upper day, 100  
O full of sorrows, to come here and spy  
The land of shadows and the cheerless realm ?  
But quit the trench, put up thy sword, that I  
May taste the blood and tell thee what shall be.’

The prophet spake ; I sheathed my sword, and he  
Quaffed the dark blood, and then took up his speech ;

‘I know thy quest. Thou comest here to learn,  
Renowned Odysseus, how thou may'st regain  
Thy native land—no easy task I trow.  
Not lightly will th' earth-shaking God forget 110  
That thou didst blind his son, or lay aside  
His wrath. Yet through much sorrow and annoy  
Ye shall attain your bourne, if, when ye moor  
Your gallant ship unto Thrinacia's shore,  
Where in the meadows feed the flocks and herds  
Of the all-seeing and all-hearing Sun,  
Thou canst restrain thy comrades and thyself.  
For if thou spar'st to touch those sacred herds,  
Strong in the loving vision of thy home,  
E'en though much suffering, ye shall reach at length 120  
The shores of distant Ithaca ; but if  
Ye hurt or harm them, then on ship and friends

Shall come a swift destruction. If it be  
That thou escape, yet late and painfully  
With loss of friends and on a stranger bark  
Thou shalt return, and find within thy walls  
Men flown with haughtiness and violence,  
Spoiling thy substance, wooing thy fair wife,  
And with false gifts tempting her constancy.  
But know, thou shalt their injuries repay ; 130  
And when by craft or in fair fight thy foes  
Lie dead before thee in thy palace halls,  
Then get thee forth again, bearing in hand  
A well-shaped oar, and journey till thou come  
Unto a country distant far from sight  
And sound of ocean, where men's homely fare  
Is void of salt, where neither painted ship,  
Nor oar that moves her like the bird of heaven,  
Stir the sea wave. And this shall be the sign—  
When with an oar across thy shoulder thrown 140  
Some wayfarer shall meet thee in amaze  
At thy strange burden, and shall deem it is  
Some rustic implement ; then fix that oar  
Fast in the ground, and to Poseidon first  
Pay all thy dues—a ram, a bull, a boar,  
The father of the herd ; next wend thy way  
Homeward, and to the Gods in order due,  
The dwellers of High Heaven, make sacrifice.  
There rest thee, till arising from the depths

Of ocean, painless death with gentle touch      150  
Shall steal upon thee in a blest old age,  
And midst a happy people. I have said.'

He ceased, and I replied ; ' Teiresias, Lord,  
I know that thus the Gods have wove the web  
Of Destiny—yet say once more why sits  
Silent beside the blood my Mother's shade,  
Nor dares to speak or look upon her son?  
Say, Lord, how shall she know me ?'

He replied ;

' Swiftly can I this mystery explain ;  
For whomsoe'er of these disbodied shades      160  
Thou sufferest to draw near and quaff the blood  
He shall declare to thee the truth ; but he  
Who drinks not, back to nether gloom shall pass.'

He spake, and in the mansions of the dead  
Vanished the Spirit of the Royal Seer.  
But I stood firm until my Mother came,  
And drank the dark blood. Me forthwith she knew  
And straightway spake ;

' My Son, how camest thou here  
In mortal guise unto these gloomy shades,  
Which mortals scarce may see ? 'Twixt them and us 170  
Lie the dread floods of mighty streams, whereof  
Chiefest is Ocean, whom no wayfarer  
May cross save with the convoy of stout bark.  
Hast thou long since come hither from Troy's siege

With ship and comrades, nor yet visited  
Thy native Ithaca and thy dear wife ?'

She spake, and I replied ; ' Oh Mother mine,  
'Tis stern necessity hath led me here  
Below, to question with the Theban Sæer ;  
Nor yet have I seen Greece or my dear land, 180  
But sorrow-laden have I wandered on,  
Since first I followed Agamemnon's host  
To Ilium famed for its fair steeds, that I  
Might fight against Troy's armies. But, say truth,  
And tell me how death's summons to thee came,  
Was it some slow disease which laid thee low,  
Or the mild shafts of quivered Artemis ?  
And tell me too of aged Sire and Son ;  
Live they and keep they fast my heritage ?  
Or do they deem that I shall ne'er return ? 190  
Say too what thinks and purposes my wife :  
Abides she by my son and keeps the house,  
Or is she wedded to Achæan chief ?'

I ceased, and she replied ; ' Thy wife yet lives,  
And bides with patient courage in thy halls,  
Though day and night go by in tearful grief.  
Nor yet hath stranger seized thy heritage ;  
But undisturbed Telemachus thy son  
Tills thy domain, and rules the equal feast  
As it beseemeth one, whom men call Chief ; 200  
For all men bid him to their company.



But in the fields far from the busy town  
Thy father dwells ; nor couch, nor coverlet,  
Nor costly broideries his slumbers soothe.  
All through the winter, with the menial herd,  
Beside the dusty hearth in beggar robes  
He lays him down, and in the summer-tide  
Or teeming autumn, on a couch of leaves  
Stretched on the ground within the vineyard's pale,  
He makes his ceaseless moan for thy return, 210  
While cheerless age steals on. So too I died ;  
But not within the palace was I slain  
By the mild shafts of quiver'd Artemis ;  
Nor did some wasting sickness rob my life,  
But strong desire and yearning love for thee  
Stole my fond life away.'

She ceased from speech,  
And I, much craving to embrace her form,  
Thrice did essay ; thrice she, like empty dream  
Or passing shadow, glided through my hands.

Then bitter grief possessed my soul, and thus 220  
I said ; 'O Mother mine, wilt thou not stay ?  
May I not round thee cast my longing arms,  
And even in this joyless land of gloom  
Our sorrows and affection interchange ?  
Is it for this Persephone has raised  
A mocking phantom for my greater grief ?'

I spake, and she made answer ; 'O my Son,

Hapless beyond compare, think not that thou  
Art by Persephone, Hell's Queen, beguiled ;  
'Tis but the law which mortal man obeys. 230  
For death unknits our fleshly tabernacle,  
And the consuming and the scorching strength  
Of fire prevails upon it, when the life  
Ceases to tenant the white bones, and when  
The spirit flies like wandering dream o' the night.  
Then haste thee to the upper light, and tell  
Unto thy wife what thou hast seen below.'

While we two thus conversed, there gathered round  
A phantom crowd of noble wives and maids,  
At the behest of dread Persephone. 240  
Thick round the blood they clustered, and I thought  
How best to question each ; so sword in hand  
And waving off the throng, I suffered each  
In turn to quaff the gore and tell the tale  
Of her descent and kindred.

First drew near  
Illustrious Tyro, great Salmoneus' child,  
The wife of Cretheus, son of Æolus.  
Upon the banks where fair Enipeus flows,  
Enipeus fairest of fair streams to see,  
She oft-times wandered, and she knew and loved 250  
The River. But Poseidon the Sea God,  
Changed to the semblance of it, lay concealed  
Where its rough eddies to the ocean pour,

And a blue wave, huge, mountainous, abrupt,  
Received and hid the maiden and the God.  
On her soft eyelids gentle slumber fell,  
And when she parted from the God's embrace  
He took her hand, and named her name, and said ;

‘Cheer thee, dear maiden ; ’ere the circling year  
Fulfil its course thou shalt fair children bear ; 260  
For not unfruitful is the love of Gods.

Them thou shalt tend with fondest care ; and now  
Wend thy way homeward, hold thy peace, nor name  
Him thou hast known to-day, yet learn that He  
Is great Poseidon the earth-shaking God.’

He spake, and sank beneath the swelling tide,  
But to her lover she bore two fair sons,  
Pelias and Neleus, mighty men and stout,  
Servants of Zeus. A Lord of flocks and herds  
In gay Iolchos Pelias dwelt, but fast 270  
By sandy Pylos Neleus had his home.  
Yet other sons to Cretheus Tyro bore,  
Æson and Pheres, Amythaon too,  
Who joyed in battle and the war-car's din.

And after her Antiope I saw,  
Asopus' daughter—she whose boast it was  
From the embrace of Zeus to bear two sons,  
Zethus and wise Amphion. These did build  
Sev'n-gated Thebes, and round the city cast  
A ring of towers ; for despite their strength 280

They might not dwell in an unfenced town.

Alcmena next, Amphitryon's wife, passed by,  
She who to mighty Zeus a son erst bore,  
All-daring, lion-hearted Heracles ;  
And Megara I saw, proud Creon's child,  
Loved by Amphitryon's all-pow'rful son.

Then Epicasta in her beauty passed,  
That wrought the fatal frenzied act of shame,  
Mother and bride of Œdipus, who slew  
His sire and wedded her who gave him life ;      290  
But swift the Gods his guilt made clear to men.  
He ruled and suffered in fair Thebes, for such  
Was the stern purpose of the Gods ; but she  
By halter pendent from the high roof tree  
Escaped from life, and through the gates of Hell  
She sorrowing passed, leaving the curse on him  
Of a dead mother's furies.

Following her  
Came Chloris, loveliest and youngest born  
Of that Amphion called Iasides.  
Who in Orchomenos held royal state.      300  
Before her beauty Neleus bowed ; with gifts  
Countless he won her as his bride, and she  
Ruled as a Queen in Pylos. Of her sprang  
Three noble sons, Nestor and Cromius,  
And doughty Periclymenus in fight.  
One other child she bore, Pero most fair

Of mortal maidens. Far and wide there came  
Suitors to win her hand ; to all in turn  
Her father gave denial, save to him,  
Who from stout Iphiclus and from his haunt 310  
In Phylace, should captive lead his herds  
Of the broadfronted and crookhornéd kine.  
No easy task, methinks ; yet one was found,  
A blameless prophet, who had heart to vow  
Himself unto the deed. But Fate forbade,  
And the rude peasant guardians of the herd  
Bound him in bonds, till days and months rolled by  
And filled the measure of the perfect year.  
Then for the sake of his prophetic art  
Stout Iphiclus released him from his hold, 320  
And the high purpose of great Zeus was wrought.

Then saw I Leda, wife of Tyndarus,  
To whom she bare two wise and goodly sons,  
Castor and Polydeuces ; one well skilled  
To tame the steed, and one to wield the glove.  
From upper day they passed, yet 'neath the earth—  
Such favour Zeus doth show them—life returns  
To each on days alternate, and they share  
With the Immortals more than mortal grace.

Aloeus' wife, Ephimedeia, next, 330  
Who won Poseidon's love, before me passed.  
To him she bare two sons, Otus by name  
And Ephialtes. Short their span of life,

But vast their stature ; fertile Earth ne'er bred  
Men of such massy mould or beauteous form,  
Save fair Orion. Scarce nine years they told,  
When with nine cubits' width, nine fathoms' height  
They towered aloft, and threatened war on Heaven.  
They sought to scale the skies ; madly they strove  
Upon Olympus Ossa's bulk to pile, 340  
And upon Ossa Pelion's leafy mass,  
That they might make a pathway to the skies.  
And they had done the deed, had they but come  
To manhood's prime ; but swift the son of Zeus  
And Fair-haired Leto smote them ; and they died,  
Ere the soft down had grown upon their cheeks,  
And darkened o'er their chins in flowing beard.

Then Phædra came and Procris, and that maid,  
Daughter of Minos, Ariadne fair,  
Whom Theseus bore from Crete unto the hill 350  
Of sacred Athens ; yet they might not wed,  
For Dionysus in the seagirt isle  
Of Dia witnessed 'gainst her, and she died  
Under the shafts of Artemis.

Then came  
Clymene, Mæra, Eriphyle too,  
Most loathed of women, who for golden bribe  
Betrayed her lord, with many more, whom I  
Know not to number or rehearse by name,  
Daughters and wives of Heroes ; night would wane,



Ere yet my tale were told. 'Tis time for rest, 360  
Or with my comrades on my bark, or here.  
In all things else I for my guidance hence  
Myself commend to you and to the Gods."

He ceased, and silence fell on all around,  
As rapt they sat throughout the shadowy hall,  
Until Arete of the white arms spake ;

"How say you now, Phæacians, seems he not  
In form and stature and in steadfast mind  
A mighty hero? But my guest he is,  
And each one here doth in that honour share. 370  
Wherefore urge not his going, nor withhold  
The gifts he needs ; great is the wealth the Gods  
Have given to you ; so freely give to him."

Then Echeneus, in debate and years  
Foremost of the Phæacians, rose and spake ;

"Wisely, my friends, our Queen hath counselled us ;  
Hear her, yet know that word and work alike  
Upon Alcinous herein depend."

Then spake Alcinous ; "Thus shall it be  
If life and rule o'er my sea-faring realm 380  
Endure. But let our guest consent to stay  
Until to-morrow's dawn ; my care shall be  
The needful gifts, and his due sending home ;  
For therefore am I king."

He spake ; and him  
Odysseus answered ; "Noble Prince and Lord,

E'en for a whole year gladly would I stay,  
If so ye bid me, and with princely gifts  
Make due provision for my sending hence.  
For if, methinks, full-handed I go home,  
Warmer will be the welcome of my friends 390  
In my dear native land of Ithaca."

Straightway to him Alcinous replied ;  
"Deem not, Odysseus, that we hold thee one  
Of those loud-tongued and babbling strollers, whom  
The black earth nurtures, moving to and fro  
Upon its surface, fashioners of lies,  
Whence and through which no man may see his way ;  
For grace and wisdom hang upon thy speech,  
And like some skilful singer thou hast told  
The tale of those disasters, which befell 400  
Thee and the Grecian host ; yet prithee say,  
Didst in the world below see aught of those  
Heroic comrades, who went forth with thee  
To war 'gainst Troy, and died beneath its walls ?  
The night is not far spent ; time there is yet  
For sleep within the house ; wherefore recount  
Thy wondrous tale, for gladly could I list  
Till break of day, if thou couldst speak so long."

To him the wise Odysseus made reply ;  
"There is a season, noble Prince, for sleep, 410  
A season too for speech ; but if ye care  
To hear my story, freely will I speak.

Nay, I will tell of yet more piteous ills,  
Of those who from Troy's bloody war-cry fled,  
Only to perish as they homeward fared,  
All for the sake of an unfaithful wife.

So to my tale. When each pale shade in turn  
Of heroine had vanished back in gloom  
At chaste Persephone's command, the form  
Of Agamemnon, Atreus' son, arose. 420  
Grieving he came, and round him the sad ghosts  
Of those who with him in Ægisthus' halls  
Had met their doom. Soon as he quaffed the blood  
He knew me, and he wept; and stretching forth  
His shadowy arms he strove to grasp my hand.  
But gone was all the ancient might, that once  
Lived in those sturdy limbs; and, when I saw,  
I wept for pity, and forthwith I said;

'O royal Agamemnon, King of Men,  
By what death cam'st thou here? did the Sea God 430  
Raise the fierce gale and smite thee on thy bark?  
Or did thy foemen give thee deadly hurt,  
When on some foray driving the fat kine  
And the fair fleecy flocks? or didst thou fall  
Fighting anew to win some other town  
And the fair women in it?'

He replied;

'Son of Laertes, O Odysseus wise,  
Poseidon raised not the tempestuous gale

And slew me on the sea, nor did my foes  
Smite me when on the foray, but by craft 440  
With my incestuous and cursed wife  
Ægisthus wrought my doom. To the high feast  
He bade me, and he slew me, as an ox  
Is at the manger slain. So pitiably  
I perished ; but my comrades, like the swine  
Butchered in some rich mansion to make cheer  
At feast or marriage banquet, were despatched.  
Oft hast thou seen, methinks, men fall in war,  
In single fight or in confused affray ;  
But oh, far sadder was that day the sight, 450  
When round the wine-cup and the crowded board  
We dying lay and the house swam in blood.  
Yet still more piteous was the cry that smote  
My ears, when close beside me Priam's child  
Cassandra fell, by Clytemnestra slain.  
Upward I threw my hands and strove to clutch  
The sword that pierced me ; but she turned aside,  
That false and shameless wife ; and as my soul  
Fled to dark Hades, she nor placed her hand  
Upon my mouth, nor closed my eyes in death. 460  
O what more dread and shameful than a wife  
Who plots so foul a deed, base bloody murder,  
Against her wedded lord ! Surely I thought  
To find a loving welcome in my home  
From child and household slave ; but she, my wife,

With the fell purpose of a guilty mind,  
Hath heaped eternal shame upon herself,  
And on all women for all time to come.'

He spake, and I made answer ; ' Surely Zeus,  
Wrathful at woman's treachery, doth hold 470  
In ancient and in deadly hate the race  
Of Atreus. We for Helen spent our lives ;  
Thee Clytemnestra's murderous wiles have slain.'

I said, but he replied ; ' Beware thee, friend,  
Of womankind, nor when in gentle mood  
Lay bare the counsels of thy secret mind ;  
Say what thou wilt, let much be still unsaid.  
Yet deem not thou that thou hast ought to fear  
From thy fair wife ; wise and discreet is she,  
Daughter of Icarus, Penelope. 480

When our host sailed we left her a young bride,  
And on her breast her infant son, who now  
In princely state sits among full-grown men.  
Yes—with thine eyes shalt thou behold thy son,  
And he shall rise to kiss thee, as is meet ;  
But my wife suffered not my eyes to rest  
On the fond vision of my child, but 'ere  
I saw him slew me. Wherefore lay to heart  
My counsel—when to Ithaca thou com'st,  
Disguise thee and in secret moor thy bark, 490  
Nor trust in aught to woman. But say now  
What tidings heard ye of my son ? lives he

With Menelaus in broad Sparta's Court,  
Or sandy Pylos or Orchomenos,  
For well I wot Orestes is not dead ?'

To whom I answer made ; ' Why dost thou thus  
Question me, son of Atreus ? I know not  
Whether in life or death he be ; 'tis vain  
To speak of what we know not.'

As we stood

In mournful converse and the hot tears flowed 500  
Down our sad cheeks, gathered a shadowy throng.  
There was Achilles, son of Peleus ; there  
Patroclus, and Antilochus the brave ;  
There Aias too, with whom no Greek might vie  
In strength and beauty save Achilles' self.  
Straightway Achilles knew me, and with tears ;

' Son of Laertes, O Odysseus wise,  
What further deed of daring dost thou plan ?  
How cam'st thou to these nether shades, where dwell  
The senseless spirits of the phantom dead ?' 510

He spake, and I replied ; ' O Peleus' son,  
Achilles, noblest of th' Achæan host ;  
Craving for counsel from Teiresias' lips  
How to regain my rocky Ithaca,  
Hither I come ; for barely have I seen  
The shores of Greece, nor yet have touched the soil  
Of my dear land, but ever bear about  
A load of grief. Yet who in sooth more blest



In time afore or after than thyself?

In life we honoured thee, e'en as a God, 520

In death thou rulest o'er thy fellow dead ;

Wherefore grieve not thy place no more is found

Amongst the living.'

Swift he made reply ;

'Nay, think not light of death ; rather would I

Toil as a bondsman to some needy hind,

Than reign o'er all the dead that e'er have died.

But tell me tidings of my noble son ;

Holds he in fight and fray the foremost place ?

And tell me too of Peleus, fares he well ?

Lives he in honour 'midst his Myrmidons, 530

Or hath his name no worship in the realm

Of Phthia where he ruled, now that old age

Hath bound him hand and foot, and I his son,

Who in my strength went warring against Troy,

And humbled their best champions to the death,

Am now all-powerless to succour him,

Who lives in upper day ? O might I go

But for brief space unto my father's Court

In my old spirit, quickly should they rue

My wrath and matchless power, who do him wrong 540

And steal his honours and his royal state.'

He spake, and I made answer ; 'Tidings none

Have I of Peleus ; but of thy loved son,

Of Neoptolemus, I will recount,

At thy dread bidding, whatsoe'er I know.

'Twas I who brought him to th' Achæan host  
On a trim bark from Scyros' isle. Whene'er  
We sat in council grave, his voice was first  
And wisest ; nor was rival to him found  
Save Nestor and myself. He, when again 550  
The war waxed hot upon the plains of Troy,  
Nor stayed nor lingered in the armed crowd,  
But in the fore-front of the battle found,  
He strewed the ground with foes, nor suffered friend  
To go before him. Who can tell the tale  
Of those he slew? 'Twas then Eurypylus  
Died 'neath his steel ; the son of Telephus,  
Fairest of all save Memnon in our host,  
Betrayed by women and the gifts they love,  
Girt by his trusty Mysians, with them died. 560  
But when the noblest of our host lay hid  
Within the wooden horse, which by his craft  
Epeius wrought, and upon me alone  
Was laid the charge to ope or close the door  
Of that dread ambush, none was there that day,  
Or chief or leader, whose limbs faltered not,  
Nor in whose eye stood the unwilling tear.  
But as with straining gaze I watched him, he  
Nor blenched in colour, nor from eyelid dashed  
The tear, but earnest prayed to sally forth, 570  
Shook his broad spear, fiercely his sword-hilt clutched,

And breathed rude slaughter on his Trojan foes.  
And when in time Troy fell before our arms,  
With ample spoils and honour crowned he went  
On board his galley, safe in life and limb ;  
For neither javelin cast nor sword-blow dealt  
In close affray had harmed him, and the wounds,  
Which chance when battle rages, passed him by.'

I ceased, and o'er the meads of asphodel  
Strode with long steps Achilles' shadowy form, 580  
Rejoicing that his son had gained renown.  
But round me grieving stood the phantom throng,  
And each made question of his kin and friends ;  
But all apart and sullen stood the shade  
Of Aias son of Telamon. Wrathful he was,  
For that I won the prize, when by the ships  
For dead Achilles' arms we some time strove.  
Thetis had given the prize, the sons of Troy  
And Pallas were the judges. O that I  
Had never won in such a strife, for then 590  
Aias would yet be living, of all Greeks  
Fairest in form and most renowned in deed,  
Save Peleus' son ! Him then in gentle speech  
I thus addressed ;

' O son of Telamon,  
Wilt thou not even in these nether shades  
Cease from thine anger for those fatal arms,  
The cause of Heaven-sent sorrow to our host ?

For them thou died'st, our tower and strong defence,  
And for thy death we mourn as bitterly  
As for Achilles' self. Yet know thou this, 600  
Almighty Zeus alone did cause thee die ;  
'Twas he who in his wrath at our array  
Did bring thy doom to pass. Then, mighty Lord,  
Bend thy proud soul to hearken to my words.'

I spake, but he replied not ; silently  
His spirit vanished in the ghostly throng.  
Yet wrathful as he was, he might have giv'n  
Some answer to my speech. But in my mind  
Rose the desire to see yet other shades,  
Dwellers of this sad realm.

Then Minos came 610  
Before my sight, illustrious son of Zeus,  
With golden sceptre on his judgment-seat,  
Making his justice known unto the crowd  
Of phantom pleaders, as they sat or stood  
In the wide halls of Hades. Likewise there  
I saw Orion, mighty hunter, still  
Driving o'er meads of asphodel the forms  
Of wild beasts on the lonely mountains slain :  
A brazen club of massy strength he bore.

Then saw I stretched at length upon the plain— 620  
And scarce nine roods confined his mighty bulk—  
Tityus, Earth's giant son. On either side  
Rending with beak and claw, and burrowing deep

Into his entrails, a fierce vulture sat ;  
Nor might he ward them off, for that he once  
Had done foul wrong to Leto, what time she,  
The bride beloved of Zeus, to Pytho went  
Through pleasant Panopeus journeying.

Next, Tantalus in bitter pains I spied  
Fixed in a pool, which reached unto his chin. 630  
Thirsting he stood, yet might not slake his thirst,  
For ever as the old man stooped to drink  
The waters backward fled, and at his feet  
Yawned the black earth. Such was the Heaven-sent  
plague.

And o'er his head the trees put forth their boughs  
Drooping with heavy fruits, pomegranate, pear,  
Apple and fig and olive ever green.  
But ever as the old man stretched his hands  
To pluck them, straight the rough wind swept them  
wide,  
And bore them to the clouds.

Then Sisyphus 640  
In grievous torment saw I. With both hands  
He heaved a heavy huge rock up the hill,  
With hand and foot slowly and painfully  
Unto the mountain's brow forcing his load ;  
But when he sought to cast it o'er the top,  
Back turned the stone, and with impetuous rush  
And rapid bound rolled downward to the plain.

Thus ever labouring o'er his task he strove,  
While the sweat poured adown his limbs, and high  
Above his head rose the dark cloud of dust. 650

There also mighty Heracles I spied.

'Twas but his phantom, for he lives and feasts  
With the blest Gods and Hebe for his mate,  
Hebe, the child of Heré and great Zeus.  
Around his shadowy form rose a shrill cry  
Of the thin ghosts, as of scared fluttering birds ;  
But he, like sable night, bearing his bow  
With arrow on the string, glared terribly,  
As archer loosing shaft ; on his breast gleamed  
An awful baldric hung by golden thong, 660  
Whereon a work of wondrous art was wrought ;  
The forms of bright-eyed lions, boars and bears,  
And show of bloody wars and deadly fights.  
Who on that baldric so impressed his art  
Ne'er made the like, nor e'er shall make again.  
Straightway he knew me, and sore grieving said ;

‘Son of Laertes, O Odysseus wise,  
Wretched withal ; for thou, methinks, dost bear  
Such grievous burden, as whilom I bore  
While yet I lived and moved beneath the sun. 670  
I was the son of Zeus himself, the son  
Of ancient Cronos, yet in grief and pain  
Unto another and a baser will  
I was constrained to serve ; at his behest



I wrought my mightiest labours ; by his will—  
Nor deemed my tyrant there was yet than this  
A harder task—from these dark realms I dragged  
To upper day th' unwilling hound of Hell,  
By bright-eyed Pallas and by Hermes sent  
Upon my desperate charge.'

So speaking, he 680

In the dark halls of Hades passed from sight.  
But I stood firm, craving to see the ghosts  
Of Heroes, who had lived and died in times  
Long past, as Theseus and Peirithous,  
Sons of the Gods ; and then in sooth might I  
Have gazed on many of those men of old,  
But that the myriad nations of the dead  
Gathered around me with discordant cries,  
And pale Fear rapt my soul ; lest, 'mid the forms  
Sent by Persephone from Hades' depths, 690  
I should the awful Gorgon's head descry.

So straight I got me to my ship, and bade  
My comrades go aboard ; and swiftly they  
The cables loosed, and bent them to their work.  
Then down the stream of Ocean sped our bark,  
First moved by oars, then by the favouring gale."



BOOK XII

## SUMMARY OF BOOK XII

ODYSSEUS concludes the story of his wanderings. He tells how he returned with his companions to Circe's island, and paid the last rites to his dead comrade Elpenor, and how Circe warned him of the dangers that were yet before him—of the Syrens' magical song, and of the Rocks that are called the Rovers, and between which no ship except only the Argo had ever passed safely—of the monster Scylla on one side of the strait and the whirlpool Charybdis on the other—and of the Island of the Sun with the sacred herds which it was sacrilege to slay or eat.

Odysseus describes how they sailed away from the island of Circe, and by stopping the ears of his comrades that they might not listen to the enchanting strain of the Syrens they escaped that danger; but how when they passed between Charybdis and Scylla, the monster seized and devoured six of his crew. He further describes how, in spite of his remonstrances, his companions landed on the Island of the Sun, and, famished and starving, whilst he was asleep, slew and ate the sacred herds.

He tells how after six days they once more put to sea, and how all perished in a storm except himself, who floating on the wreck was borne back by the tide to Charybdis, whence escaping he drifted for nine days on the broken timbers till he reached Ogygia, Calypso's Isle. There the Goddess received him, and kept him a beloved but unwilling prisoner for seven years.

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So ends the tale of Odysseus' wanderings, told by him to Alcinous, and in the next and subsequent books Homer describes his return to Ithaca, with all that he said and did there, and the punishment which he inflicted on the Suitors.

## BOOK XII

“ Now when our bark was quit of Ocean’s stream,  
Ere long it came unto the wide-wayed sea  
And to th’ Æcean isle, where early Dawn  
Delighteth in the dance and hath her home,  
And where the sun doth rise. There on the sand  
We beached our galley and we stepped ashore ;  
Then fall’n asleep we waited for the day.

When rosy Eos brightened in the sky,  
I sent my company to Circe’s house  
To bear the dead Elpenor forth ; and we 10  
Cut wood, and on a headland’s highest brow  
We buried him with grief and bitter tears.  
And when our comrade and his arms were burnt,  
We piled the barrow high, a pillar raised,  
And on the topmost mound set up an oar.

And now our task was done. Circe herself  
Knew of our coming from the realms below,

And all arrayed in her adornments came  
To meet us on our way ; with her her maids  
Bare bread and store of meat and dark red wine ; 20  
And in our midst the Goddess stood and spake ;

‘ O daring souls, who in the flesh have seen  
The house of Hades, ye whose fate it is  
Twice to submit to death, whilst other men  
Die once—come eat my meat and drink my wine  
The livelong day ; and with to-morrow’s dawn  
Ye shall set sail and I will point your path,  
And everything make plain, lest some mishap  
Bring ye to sorrow or by land or sea.’

She spake, and to her words we gave consent. 30  
So all the day unto the set of sun  
We sat and feasted on the meat and wine ;  
But when the sun went down and darkness fell,  
My crew slept by the hawsers ; then my hand  
She took, led me apart and made me sit  
While she lay down, and straitly questioned me.  
So I in order told her all my tale,  
And she made answer ;

‘ Yea—these things have come  
To their appointed end. So list my words  
And thou shalt keep them by the aid of Heaven 40  
In sure remembrance. First then ye shall come  
Unto the Syrens, those enchantresses ;  
For he who draws him near unwittingly,



And hears their voice, hath neither memory  
Nor joy in wife or child or distant home.  
But him the Syrens, sitting in their mead  
Entrance with their sweet song, while round them lie  
In foul corruption piled the bones of men  
And the poor wasted skin. Pass by their haunt  
And with sweet wax seal up thy comrades' ears, 50  
That none of them may hearken ; but if thou  
Thyself wouldst hear their lay, enjoin thy men  
To bind thee hand and foot against the mast,  
Upright, that thou mayst list that joyous strain ;  
And even though thou may'st entreaty make  
To be released, let thy friends all the more  
Strain thy bonds closer.

Now when thou hast sailed  
Beyond the confines of these Goddesses,  
I may not tell thee what thy path shall be  
Of the twain roads before thee. With thyself 60  
Take thou good counsel ; only I will show  
How the two courses lie. On the right side  
Frown the o'erhanging cliffs, where the loud surge  
Of dark-eyed Amphitrite at their base  
Roars hoarsely. These are they which the blest Gods  
The Rovers call. No fowl of air doth pass  
Between those crags, not e'en the trembling doves  
That bear Ambrosia to their Father Zeus ;  
For ever as one pair that passage tries

The smooth rocks close and one is seen no more ; 70  
Yet doth Zeus keep the tale of birds complete,  
Sending another to replace the first.  
No bark or crew that ever sailed those seas  
Escaped that peril ; planks and human forms,  
Tossed to and fro by wave and fiery blast,  
Float on the waters ; yet one single ship,  
Argo, beloved of all, once passed these straits,  
Sent by *Æætes* forth, and even she  
Had surely foundered on those cruel rocks,  
But that kind *Heré* sent deliverance 80  
For love of *Jason*.

Now of these two cliffs  
One reaches unto Heaven, and round its crest  
Hangs a dark cloud, which never floats away,  
Or leaves its summit bare in the clear air  
Of summer-tide or autumn. On that height  
No man of mortal mould may dare to tread  
Though he had twenty hands and feet ; for smooth  
And polished is that rock—wherein half-way  
A misty cavern lies, tow'rds *Erebus*  
And nether darkness turned. Past this be sure, 90  
Noble *Odysseus*, that ye hold your course.  
Deep-set that cavern lies ; no archer stout  
Might from his hollow ship an arrow send  
Into its depths, where, barking fearfully,  
*Scylla* her habitation hath. Her voice

Is like the yelping of some new-born whelp ;  
Her form is that of monster dread. Nor God  
Nor man would joy to meet her face to face.  
Twelve dangling feet she hath, and six long necks,  
On each a fearful head with triple row 100  
Of thick-set teeth environed with black death.  
Sunk to her waist within that hollow cave,  
She rears her many heads outside the pit,  
And thence she fishes angling round the rock  
For dolphin, or sea-dog, or whatsoe'er  
Of larger sort is nourished in the depths  
Of boisterous Amphitrite. From the maw  
Of that fell beast no mariner may boast  
To make escape ; each head doth snatch a man  
From out the dark-prowed bark that saileth by. 110

But mark, Odysseus, yet another rock  
Hard by the first, distant one arrow's flight,  
Whereon a mighty fig-tree in full leaf  
Grows, and beneath Charybdis greedily  
Drinks in the sable flood. Thrice in the day  
That swirling gulf disgorges and sucks in  
The waters. Never mayst thou sail those seas  
When that dread whirlpool doth engulf the tide ;  
Not in that hour could the earth-shaking God  
Himself deliver thee ! Steer then thy bark 120  
Near Scylla's rock, for better 'tis to mourn  
The loss of six men than of all thy crew.'

She spake, and I made answer ;

‘Tell me true,

Tell me, O Goddess, how if I escape,

I may avenge me of this cursed beast

For my lost comrades?’

So I spake, and she,

That peerless Goddess, answered ;

‘Surely now,

O daring warrior, toil and feats of war

Are in thy mind, nor can’st thou bend thy will

E’en to th’ Immortal Gods ; yet know thou this— 130

This creature is no mortal, but a pest,

Deathless and fierce and unassailable ;

War not against her ; flight is thy best arm ;

For if thou tarriest beside that rock

To don thy armour, much I fear that she

Will sally forth and with her many heads

Will snatch as many more from off thy bark.

Then stoutly hold thy course and loudly call

Upon Cratais, Scylla’s dam ; and she

Perchance may save thee from her daughter fell. 140

Next to Thrinacia’s isle thy course shall lie,

Where Helios pastureth his many herds

And his fat flocks. Sev’n herds of kine are there,

Sev’n flocks of sheep, and fifty head in each.

They neither multiply by birth, nor waste

By natural decay ; but Goddesses,

The bright-haired Nymphs, do shepherd them ;  
Fair Phaethusa and Lampetié,  
Whom to Hyperion bright Neæra bare.  
They by their lady Mother nurtured were, 150  
And to Thrinacia's isle afar were sent  
To dwell and keep their father's flocks and herds.  
Now as thou carest for thy distant home,  
Do these no wrong, and ye to Ithaca  
Albeit with tribulation shall return ;  
But if thou harm'st them I do prophecy  
Utter destruction to thy bark and crew,  
And if thou 'scap'st thyself, thou shalt return  
Late and in evil plight bereft of friends.'

She spake, and Eos on her golden throne 160  
Glowed in the sky ; but forthwith through the isle  
The Goddess took her way, and to my ship  
I went and bade my comrades go aboard,  
And slack the cables ; straightway they gave ear,  
And sitting in due order with their oars  
Smote on the hoary main. Then swift astern  
Fell on the dark-prowed bark the favouring breeze  
Sent us by Circe of the human speech,  
That fair-tressed reverend Goddess. So with gear  
And tackle all disposed we sat us down, 170  
And held our course as wind and steersman willed.  
Then with a heavy heart I to my crew ;

'O friends, it were not meet that one or two

Alone of all our company should know  
The oracles which Circe hath declared ;  
Therefore will I make known them, that ye may  
Perish with full foreknowledge of your fate,  
Or shun your doom and live. First then she bade  
Us to beware the Syrens' witching strain  
And the enamelled mead ; yet did she say 180  
That I alone might hearken to their voice,  
Though straitly bound in bonds unto the mast,  
Upright, immovable ; but if I pray  
And bid ye loose me, closer strain my bonds.'

Thus did I show in order what should be  
Unto my crew ; and straightway our stout bark  
Came to the island of the Syrens twain,  
Moved by a gentle breeze. Then fell the wind,  
A breathless calm came o'er us and some God  
Did lull the waves to rest. Uprose my crew 190  
And furled and stowed the sails, and with the blades  
Of their smooth oars they made the waters white.  
But with my sword I clove a lump of wax,  
And in my strong hands kneaded it, till it  
Warmed in the hot beams of Hyperion's son,  
And therewith I the ears of all my men  
Most closely sealed, while they in turn with ropes  
Fast bound me hand and foot unto the mast ;  
Then sat them down and on the hoary main  
Smote with their oars. But as we sped along, 200



Far from the shore as a man's voice might reach,  
The sisters spied us coming, and rang out  
Their sweet shrill song ;

‘ Here, turn thee here,’ they sang,  
‘ Noble Odysseus, glory of thy race ;  
Moor here thy bark and hearken to our lay,  
For never mariner in his dark ship  
Doth pass our shore but tarrieth to hear  
Our honied strain ; then joyous saileth on,  
Taking more wisdom with him than he brought.  
For we are wise ; we know each toil and woe    210  
Argive and Trojan in broad Troy endured  
By Heaven's design ; we know whatever things  
Are doomed to be upon the fruitful earth.’

Such was the dulcet strain they sang ; and I  
Would fain have listened, and with wink and nod  
I bade my comrades set me free ; but they  
Bent stoutly to their oars ; incontinent  
Rose Perimedes and Eurylochus,  
And strained my bonds yet tighter than they were.  
But when the Syrens' isle was past, and we    220  
No more might hear their voice or witching song,  
Forth from their ears my comrades drew the wax  
Which I on them had smeared, and set me free.

Now as that island momentarily grew less,  
A smoke and mighty surge rose on our sight,  
And in our ears the roaring of the main.

For very fear the oars fell from our hands  
As down the stream they rang, nor did our ship  
Make way when we no longer plied the oars.  
But as I stepped the deck I cheered my crew, 230  
Speaking to each of them in honied words ;

‘O friends, oft tried in ill’s extremity,  
Deem not this peril shall be worse than that  
Which ye endured, when by his brutal strength  
The Cyclops made ye captives in his den.  
Then by my courage and my counsel thence  
We did escape ; therefore take thought of this,  
And hearken to my words. Smite with your oars  
The deep surge of the sea, if so that Zeus  
May from this death grant us deliverance ; 240  
And thou, the steersman, I bid ponder well  
My counsel, since thou hast the helm in charge,  
Keep the ship well away from smoke and surge  
And steer her nigh the rocks, lest unawares  
She pass from thy control and come to harm.’

I said, and to my speech they gave consent ;  
But of dread Scylla, that resistless pest,  
I spake no word, lest in their fear my crew  
Might leave their oars and hide them in the hold.  
Yet in that hour the warning Circe gave— 250  
Stern warning that I should not don my mail—  
Escaped my mem’ry, and in armour clad,  
And with two spears in hand upon the deck,

I stood hard by the prow, whence I might sight  
The rocks of Scylla, which must bring such woe  
Upon my crew. But could I nought descry,  
And wearily that day I strained my gaze  
Towards the misty cliff.

So up the strait

Grieving we sailed. On one side Scylla lay,  
On th' other dread Charybdis, which awhile 260  
Sucked down in fearful guise the salt sea wave.  
Oft-times, like cauldron on a mighty fire,  
In jets she vomited the water forth,  
Up-seething from its depths, whilst overhead  
The spray was scattered on the topmost cliffs.  
But when she drew the briny water down  
She made its deep gulfs visible, while round  
The rock roared terribly, and underneath  
The parted tide earth and dark sand lay bare.  
Then pale fear seized my crew, and as we gazed 270  
With terror struck, Scylla from out the ship  
Plucked six of my companions—chiefest they  
For strength and hardihood—and as I looked  
Round on my ship and comrades, I could see  
The hands and feet of those, who thus were ta'en,  
Lifted aloft; and in their agony  
They called on me by name for the last time.  
As when some fisher on a jutting rock  
Angles for little fish with his long rod,

Casting for bait into the deep below 280  
The horny refuse of some homestead ox,  
And snatches out and casts upon the shore  
The quivering victim—so my friends were drawn  
Up the cliff's face, and there within her gates,  
Shrieking aloud and stretching out their hands  
In their dread need, the monster them devoured.  
Of all my sorrows on the ocean's paths,  
Of all the piteous sights mine eyes have seen  
This was the saddest.

Now when we had passed

The rocks of Scylla and Charybdis' pool, 290  
Straightway we came unto the God's blest Isle,  
Where are the broad-browed kine and the fat sheep  
Of King Hyperion. As I neared the land,  
From my dark ship I could the lowing hear  
Of the stalled oxen and the bleat of sheep.  
Then came to mind the words of the blind seer,  
Theban Teiresias, and the Ocean Nymph,  
Who oft had charged me to avoid the isle  
Of Helios King, the cheerer of men's hearts ;  
So to my comrades sadly did I say ; 300  
    ' Hear me my friends, although in evil case,  
Whilst I those oracles declare, wherein  
Æoëan Circe, and Teiresias  
Did straitly charge me to avoid the isle  
Of Helios King, the cheerer of men's hearts,

Where some dread woe they said should us befall ;  
Then sail we on beyond these fateful shores.'

I spake, but their hearts failed them, and forthwith  
With surly speech Eurylochus replied ;

' Fearless thou art Odysseus, and thy strength 310  
Exceeds the strength of other men, thy limbs  
Are wrought of adamant and need no rest.  
And now thou wilt not suffer that thy friends,  
Spent with long toil and overwhelmed with sleep,  
Should land and make their meal upon this isle ;  
But thou dost bid us to begone this night,  
And wander forth across the misty main.  
But from the night proceed the boisterous winds,  
The curse of navies ; for what mariner  
Can 'scape destruction when the swift storm-blast 320  
From out the South, or the tempestuous West—  
Winds which not e'en the Sovereign Gods control—  
Fatal to ships, shall strike him unawares.  
Then yield we up ourselves to shadowy night,  
And tarry here and make our evening meal  
Beside our ship, but with to-morrow's light  
We will once more launch forth on the broad sea.'

So spake Eurylochus, and all the crew  
Gave ear unto his speech ; but I knew well  
Some God was planning evil ; so I said ; 330

' I am but one and ye are many men ;  
Constrain me if ye will, yet swear this oath,

If we shall chance upon or herd or flock,  
Swear ye will not in wanton wickedness  
Slay either ox or sheep, but eat in peace  
The food which Circe the Immortal gave.'

I spake ; and they, as I had bade them, sware,  
And when the oath was duly sworn and done,  
Within the haven we our galley moored  
Hard by a fount of water sweet ; and there 340  
My comrades landed and their meal prepared.  
But when their fill of meat and drink was ta'en  
They thought them of the friends whom they had lost,  
Torn from their ship by Scylla's ravenous maw,  
And as they wept, deep sleep fell on their eyes.  
Now when the third watch of the night had come,  
And slanting stars had changed their place in Heaven,  
Against us Zeus the storm-compeller raised  
A wondrous wind and tempest, and with clouds  
Both land and sea grew dark, and night rushed  
down. 350

When rosy Eos brightened in the sky,  
Into a cave wherein the Nymphs were wont  
To weave the dance and make their trysting-place,  
We hauled our galley. There I called my men,  
And thus I spake unto them ;

'O my friends,

For that on board we have both meat and drink,  
Look that we touch not either herd or flock



To our undoing, seeing they belong  
To Helios dreadful Lord, who sees and hears  
All mortal things.'

I spake, and they gave ear 360

Unto my counsel, but for a whole month  
The South wind blew, nor came there other wind  
Save East or South ; and while our store of corn  
And red wine lasted, for dear love of life  
My comrades kept their hands from off the kine.  
But when our food was wasted, then my crew  
With barbed hooks in search of fish or bird,  
Or whatsoe'er might chance to come to hand,  
Forth wandered, driven by necessity  
And hunger's pangs ; and through the isle I went 370  
To pray the Gods if haply they might show  
Some way of safe return. Thus I went forth,  
And shunning my companions, bathed my hands  
In some close covert from the wind, and prayed  
To all the Gods who in Olympus dwell ;  
And they sweet sleep upon my eyelids shed.  
Meanwhile Eurylochus unto our crew  
Set forth his crooked counsel ;

' Hearken now,

My friends,' he said, ' albeit in evil case.  
To mortal man, come in what guise it will, 380  
Death comes abhorrent ; but of all most sad  
It is to meet our doom by famine's pang.

Take we the choicest then of Helios' kine,  
And to th' Immortal Gods who dwell in Heaven  
Offer in sacrifice ; and if at last  
We come to Ithaca our native land,  
We will to Helios, King Hyperion, raise  
A costly shrine and fill it with fair gifts.  
But if in wrath for his straight-hornéd kine  
King Helios willeth to destroy our ship,  
And if so minded are the other Gods,  
Be mine to drink the salt wave and to die  
Rather than waste away in desert isle.'

390

So spake Eurylochus, and they gave ear,  
And took the choicest of King Helios' kine,  
For those fair heifers with their crooked horns  
And their broad foreheads cropped the neighbouring  
mead  
Hard by our dark-prowed ship ; round them they stood,  
And plucking fresh leaves from a lofty oak—  
For barley there was none—they prayed the Gods. 400  
But when the prayer was done they slew and flayed  
The beasts, and cut the slices from the thighs,  
And wrapped them in the fat in double fold,  
And on them laid the raw meat ; but sweet wine  
They had not for libation, so they poured  
Water upon the burning sacrifice,  
Roasting the entrails. When the thighs were burnt  
And they had tasted of the inward parts,

They minced the rest and placed it on the spits.  
Then sleep fled from my eyelids and I woke, 410  
And to the beach and ship I took my way ;  
But as I neared our well-trimmed bark, there came  
Upon me the sweet savour of the roast,  
And on th' Immortal Gods I cried aloud  
With groans and tears ;

‘ O Father Zeus and ye  
Blessed and deathless Beings, in what sleep  
Fatal and pitiless have I been lulled,  
While my companions did this deed of wrong.’

Then swift a messenger to Helios came,  
Long-robed Lampetié, and told the tale, 420  
That we had slain his kine ; and in his wrath  
Helios thus spake ;

‘ O father Zeus and ye  
Blessed and deathless Gods, avenge me now  
Upon Odysseus’ comrades who have slain—  
Slain in their wanton insolence my kine,  
Wherein I joyed, whether I went my way  
Up to the starry Heaven or turned me back  
From Heaven to earth. But if they pay me not  
Full measure of atonement, I will go  
To Hades, there to shine among the dead.’ 430

To him the cloud-compelling Zeus replied ;  
‘ Shine on, O Helios, among the Gods  
And midst the dwellers of the fertile earth,

But I will smite and shatter their swift bark  
With my hot thunderbolt upon the sea.'

So to Calypso Hermes told the tale,  
And so the fair-haired Goddess told to me.  
But when I reached the sea-shore and my ship,  
I chode with each man of my company,  
But we might find no cure. The kine were slain, 440  
And soon the Gods showed signs and prodigies ;  
The hides 'gan creep, the flesh upon the spits,  
Both roast and raw, bellowed, and all around  
We seemed to hear the lowing of the kine.

So for six days feasted my company  
On Helios' choice heifers ; but when Zeus  
Added a seventh to the tale of days,  
The storm-wind ceased from blowing ; and forthwith  
We stepped the mast, hoisted the snowy sail,  
And so put forth to sea ; but when the isle 450  
Was left astern, nor other land appeared,  
Save only sea and sky, a murky cloud—  
For so Zeus willed it—stood above our ship,  
And all the main grew dark. A little space  
Our ship ran on her course, then suddenly  
The creaking West wind with tempestuous blast  
Snapped the two forestays, and the mast fell back,  
And all the tackle in a heap was hurled  
Into our hold, while falling by the stern  
Our mast asunder clave the steersman's head ; 460

And like some diver, headlong from the deck  
He fell, and yielded up his gallant soul.  
Then did Zeus thunder and his lightning cast ;  
Then smitten with the bolt and sulphurous flame  
Our galley quivered every timber through.  
Forth from the ship my crew were cast ; like gulls  
Round the black hull they floated on the wave,  
Nor did the God vouchsafe them a return.

I paced the deck till sides and keel fell in,  
And the surge drave the wreck and snapped the mast 470  
Close by the keel ; then over it was hurled  
The ox-hide mainstay, wherewith I made fast  
Both mast and keel, and so bestriding them  
Was borne along before the deadly gale.

Now did the West wind cease from its fierce blast,  
And soon the South wind blew, bringing dismay  
Into my soul, for that I knew I must  
Retrace my way unto Charybdis dread.  
So through the livelong night I helpless drave,  
And with the dawn I came to Scylla's rock 480  
And terrible Charybdis. The dark pool  
Was yawning with the waters it engulfed,  
When I upsprang and to the tall fig-tree  
Clung like a bat ; nor had I wherewithal  
To rest my feet, nor place whereon to stand ;  
For far and wide the roots stretched forth, and high  
The long and mighty boughs hung overhead,

And cast their shadows on Charybdis' tide.  
But steadfastly I clung until once more  
The waters vomited both mast and keel. 490

    Welcome they came. It was the selfsame hour,  
When he whose charge it is to judge the strife  
Of younger men, ariseth joyfully,  
As from the weary market-place he wends  
His homeward way unto his evening meal.  
So at that hour arose the broken spars  
From out Charybdis. Like a plummet I  
Into the waters dropped outside the wreck,  
And sitting on the timbers oared myself  
With my two hands ; nor did the Sire of Gods 500  
And men e'er suffer me again to look  
On Scylla, else I sure had died the death.

    Thence for nine days by wind and water borne,  
On the tenth night unto Ogygia's isle  
The Gods conveyed me ; where Calypso dwells,  
Dread fair-tressed Goddess of the mortal speech.  
She loved and tended me. But why rehearse  
A twice-told tale which to thy noble wife  
And thee yest'reen I spake within thy halls ;  
For it me-seemeth me to tell anew 510  
A tale which I already have made plain ?”



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